

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 548. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1879. PRICE TWOPENCE.

SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER V. A STUDENT OF DIVINITY.

THE sunshine of that same twenty-second of December (the forenoon of which has been already passed by the reader in the vicinity of Cedarhurst and Dene Hall) made but a poor show in London. If it was pallid in the country, in the city it acquired a dull brownish tint; insomuch that its broadest illumination was scarcely as dusky as a deep shadow would be in lands less solicitously veiled from the unceremonious stare of Phœbus. It persevered, however, with praiseworthy self-sacrifice, in forcing its ineffective way into the gloomy heart of many an unholy court and alley, rendering the squalor and uncleanness a little more conspicuous, and thereby reminding the inhabitants, not in the most complimentary manner, that there was a heaven above even them. It also laid itself against the swarthy faces of buildings in the more aristocratic quarters of the town; and brooded grimly over the blighted expanses of dingy turf in the parks. Its sombre traces were visible along Regent Street and the Strand, and even on the upper storeys of those narrow little streets which extend thence towards the river. From the windows of a lodging situated at the bottom of one of these lanes, it might be seen casting a dusky gleam upon the buttresses of a great shapeless bridge, across which smoky trains rumbled to and fro, and glinting dully athwart the muddy waves of the Thames, enlivened by the ponderous carage of slow barges and the fussy palpitant of steamboats. From these windows, also, the transcendent orb

of day himself might sometimes be detected, by a keen pair of eyes, travelling through space incognito, in the likeness of the crown of an ancient straw hat. The disguise was perfect.

Although the lodging we speak of was within half a minute's walk of the populous Strand, the noise of the traffic hardly penetrated to it. The quiet, however, was altogether a different thing from the quiet of the country: a sort of shadow of the everlasting hubbub still reached the ear, so that, had you been conveyed hither blindfold, you would have known (without being able to explain how) that you were in the midst of some great centre of human turmoil. The rooms themselves, on the second floor, were comfortably and even handsomely furnished. The sitting-room, which opened into the bedroom, had pale reddish-brown walls, and curtains and upholstery of olive-green stamped velvet; the long low bookcase and the study table were of oak; and above the mantelpiece was an oblong panelled looking-glass, with bevelled edges, mounted in a flat velvet-covered frame. It was evidently a room inhabited by a man; but it would not have been easy, from the testimony of its still life, to infer the man's age, character, or pursuits. There were to be seen few or none of the fanciful and bizarre knickknacks which commonly ornament the shelves and tables of young gentlemen of fashion. Here were no cartes of pretty actresses; nor were the walls enriched by studies of hunting-scenes in burnt-sienna, sap-green, and vermilion. There were no French mannikins in terracotta, no grotesque Japanese monsters, no boxing-gloves, and no tobacco-pipes. But upon the bookcase stood an excellent

model in bronze of the Venus of Milo; and round the room were hung, in plain frames, a proof engraving by Bettelini of Carracci's Jupiter and Juno; an original pen-drawing, by Correggio, of an angel writing; an etching of Michael Angelo's Temptation and Fall; and a tiny landscape study in water-colours by Turner. On the mantel-piece, at either side of the looking-glass, stood two tall tankards of ivory, carved with figures in high relief; and between them, in the centre, ticked an entirely modern and able-bodied clock, all gold and plate-glass, and with a countenance expressive of the time in four different quarters of the world. This clock, somehow, produced a refined and not offensive impression of cynicism. Against the corner of the book-case leaned three or four walking-sticks, whose most obvious peculiarity was their extraordinary thickness and heaviness. The book-case contained a large number of eighteenth century memoirs, French, German, and English; Heine's *Reise Bilder*; the novels of Fielding and of Jane Austen; the sonnets of Michael Angelo and Dante's *Vita Nuova*, bound together in one volume; the Bible, and Webster's Dictionary, in similar bindings; the works of Horace, Ovid, and Catullus; and on the lower shelf a great many volumes, chiefly by Jesuit writers, the titles of which would be unfamiliar to most English ears. Next the book-case stood a small rosewood harmonium; and, to make an end of this catalogue, in front of one of the windows was placed a sort of stand, holding a block of seasoned sandal-wood, in process of being translated into a richly carved casket. A collection of tools lay together on a lower shelf of the stand, and round about were scattered aromatic chips and sawdust.

A heavy green velvet portière hung in the doorway between this room and the bed-chamber, which contained nothing whatever beyond the ordinary appurtenances of cleanliness, repose, and comfort. The owner of the apartment stood before the dressing-table, gravely and vigorously brushing his light-brown curly hair with a couple of ivory-backed brushes. A majolica flower-pot, containing a single yellow narcissus, occupied the window-sill on his right.

The face reflected in the toilet-glass was young in years—under thirty—but mature in expression. The remarkable unevenness of its modelling gave the features, even when at rest, a singularly vivid stamp

of life: in what was really stable there appeared to be (by a familiar optical illusion) a continual flux and change. It might almost be said that, from the two sides of this visage, two distinct and yet interwoven characters looked simultaneously forth, producing upon the beholder an impression at once single and complex.

The eyebrows, several degrees darker than the hair, nearly met across the face, and the left eye looked almost black in comparison with the right one. The latter, moreover, had a slight cast in it, thereby enhancing in no small measure that peculiar duality of aspect already alluded to. The whole lower part of the face on the right side was less full and rounded than on the left; even the lips had a shorter curve on that side, imparting a flavour of quiet irony to the mouth. The nose was nearly straight; the short chin curved outward boldly, and had all the sharpness of contour of a cutting on an antique gem. The head was hollowed at the temples, and expanded nobly above; the hair growing thin on the region of the crown, but curling close and thick at the sides. Upon the left cheek-bone, just beneath the hollow of the eye, was a conspicuous black mole.

Such a face, dispassionately considered, would hardly be deemed beautiful; and if it had belonged to a woman, there would probably have been found no one to dispute its ugliness. As it was, many people maintained it to be superbly handsome. Many women, after being repelled by it at first, discovered in it on further acquaintance an indescribable fascination. Men were variously affected towards it, according as they liked or disliked what is intelligent, witty, bold, sarcastic, and inscrutable. Upon the whole, it made more enemies than friends, and more unavowed enemies than open ones. It was a face which sooner or later compelled you to take sides, so to speak; the only impossible attitude with regard to it being that of indifference.

There was something in the way this gentleman plied his hair-brushes, in the pose of his well-knit figure before the dressing-table, and in the air with which, having brushed his hair to his satisfaction, he struck the brushes together and put them down, that indicated self-possession and power. He now took from its peg, and slowly put on, a voluminous wadded dressing-gown, which had seen its best days so far as appearance went, but which was

none the less comfortable on that account. Wrapping this round him, and securing it at the waist by the tasselled cords, he pushed aside the portiere and entered the sitting-room. The table was set for breakfast; but the covered dish of eggs and bacon, the pot of coffee, and the rack of toast, were disposed about the hearth, subject to the beneficent glow of the coals in the grate. Three or four letters lay beside the plate on the table. The gentleman took them up, glanced at the superscription, and laid them down again.

"Mrs. Blister means well, but she lacks discrimination," he said to himself, as he transferred the eatables from the hearth to the table, and took his seat in the chair. "A more capacious soul would have put the letters in the fire, and left the breakfast to take care of itself. These eggs have lost their succulence. Quarter to twelve, though!—serve me right. Is the world in general, I wonder, served right as seldom as I am? Well, at all events, last night puts me five hundred to the good. These be not fruits meet for repentance. Evidently I am a child of wrath, abandoned to my fate, else I shouldn't be so deliberately lucky. St. Augustine says that Providence made the taste of his worldly pleasures bitter in his mouth, to the end that he might seek pleasures without alloy. But where is the bitterness of five hundred pounds? Ha! I will ask Culver this evening. There are hopes for Culver. Tum, tum-tum, tum tilly-tum-tum ti! Mrs. Blister, that coffee was not up to your usual high coffee-mark. I shall console myself with a cigarette. The corner-stone of true dissipation is temperance. What does a man who smokes every day know of the joys of tobacco! How can a creature who pays his bills every week appreciate the luxury. Come, let us see what they are! Bill for the clock, 'as before rendered.' Well, the clock shall be paid for; it has stood by me well; I should often have been floundering in mere eternity but for the clock. Oh, livery-stable has heavy payments to make, has he! He shall wait; acute cases of distress always harden my heart. Why, here's something that actually is not a bill! Oh, oh! an anonymous letter, as sure as I'm a student in divinity!

"Mr. S. Strome is informed that the young lady who has been living for the last four months at Number Ninety-seven, Falkirk Road, needs looking after. She has not been behaving in a becoming or

prudent manner. There is an old admirer in the case. If you wish to save her from worse folly than she has committed already, you had better see her within the next twenty-four hours.'

"Now, what is at the bottom of this? Crafty men condemn anonymous letters; simple men admire them; wise men use them. This philanthropist seems to be adequately informed as to names and dates: is the rest a lie? 'An old admirer;' it can't be the sergeant? Pahaw!—Women are said to be unaccountable though. Suppose it were true; suppose she and her old admirer had made it up and eloped; would I be glad or sorry? Speak out, Sebastian! no one hears you. Humph! it's not to be decided in a moment. I'll see her first—I'll go at once! And run my head into the trap my nameless philanthropist has prepared for me? No. Jealousy is his bait, but he mistakes his fish. 'Worse folly,' is it? Why not the most sensible course in the circumstances? Why interfere? Tell the truth, Sebastian: you'd be glad to be rid of it all! Well. But it can't be true, she wouldn't do it! Still, how do I know? October—it's two months since I saw her. But the thing's impossible—it's absurd! Then the less reason why I should go there. Humph! it needs thinking about. I'll have a bout with the tools, and wait for an inspiration. So Providence hadn't quite given me up after all. 'And the taste of worldly pleasure was made bitter.' Confess, St. Augustine, among your many confessions, that you were the least taste in life of a humbug!"

Thus soliloquising the student in divinity left the breakfast-table, and betook himself to the stand in the window. He examined the half-finished sandal-wood box, holding it in various positions nearer or farther from his eyes, and frowning and whistling over it after the manner of a sagacious handicraftsman; then selected a file and a small chisel from the tools on the lower shelf, and settled himself quietly to work. To look at him, you would have said he was wholly absorbed in his occupation.

In the mid-career of his operative energy a knock came at the door. He worked on until it was repeated; then laid down his chisel, clenched his teeth together (a common trick of his, and in no way indicative of a specially savage mood), and said sharply, "Come in!"

The door opened, and a short, pale, plump young gentleman, with a heavy

mouth, sandy upright hair, and an eyeglass, made his appearance in a tentative manner on the threshold. Being invited to come forward, he did so in a still dubious but always amiable manner, keeping the eyeglass-furnished side of his person constantly in advance, and making short steps, as a person might do who walked in darkness, and feared invisible barriers or pitfalls.

"I'm afraid I'm interrupting you when you're busy," said this personage, in a slow-moving falsetto voice—a kind of voice more suggestive of chronic amiability than perhaps any other in the world. "I thought I'd look you up, you know, after last night."

"Sit down, Smillet, and try to be sympathetic for once in your life!" said the other, rising to meet and shake hands with him, and put him in a chair. "You are the only man in London in whom my soul yearns spontaneously to confide. Were you a Jesuit priest, and I a Roman Catholic, I'd make a permanent contract with you to confess me."

"Strome, how you do go on! Why would you do that, pray?"

"Never mind; asking questions is not your forte. We are spiritual complements of each other—positive and negative poles—plus and minus signs. Take your coat off."

Mr. Smillet observed his friend for a moment, his head tipped back, and his short thick nose appearing to snuff up the information which the eyes of a less near-sighted person would have afforded him. He then unbuttoned and disembarassed himself of his top-coat, emitting little disjointed murmurs the while—inarticulate chirpings of conventional civility. He finally reseated himself, passed his plump taper-fingered hands up through his hair, settled his eyeglass, and smiled.

An odd sort of comradeship existed between these two dissimilar men. Smillet, some nine months previous to this date, had unexpectedly come into possession of a large property. Like Strome, he was the only son of a clergyman, and had always looked forward to following the clerical calling, and for some time he and Strome had pursued their studies together. Smillet, however, had had periods of great anxiety and spiritual distress as to his personal fitness for the cure of souls; and his naïve fears lest he might become the means of consigning multitudes, himself included, to everlasting torments, used greatly to

amuse his even-tempered but somewhat saturnine colleague; nor did the latter refrain, in a spirit half-curious, half-mischievous, from occasionally exasperating this sore place in poor Smillet's consciousness, and studying his shrinkings. But in the midst of these exercises came the grand transformation scene of the legacy. Smillet with three thousand a year might cut the Gordian knot of doubts which had harassed Smillet with two hundred and fifty. He gave up the ministry on the spot, and entered upon the life of a man about town. His inner man developed an unsuspected serenity and self-possession—his money actually seemed to do him spiritual good. He formally abjured all pretension to ascetic virtues and strict principles; but the effect of this abjuration was not to make him immoral, but to remove the temptations to be so which had previously beset him. He wore conspicuous cravats and knowing hats; he was to be seen at the fashionable clubs and theatres; he shunned not the society of the harum-scarum and the dissolute; but he failed to be dissolute or harum-scarum himself. He would sit for hours amidst his gay companions, piping out his little remarks or repartees as occasion demanded, lifting up his funny thick nose with its wide enquiring nostrils, smiling with inveterate good-humour, and readjusting his ever-unstable eyeglass, which he had adopted in lieu of spectacles at the outset of his fashionable career; but to active evil he seemed to have no inclinations. He enjoyed a quite illogical popularity among his associates, and even exercised—without himself being aware of it—a certain kind of influence over them. He appeared to like almost everybody; but to one person he was devoted, and that person was Sebastian Strome. He held and promulgated the belief that Strome was destined to be one of the grand figures of history. He discerned in him the elements of a Napoleon, a Luther, a Newton. And Strome, who recognised, or fancied he recognised, in some of Smillet's qualities and tendencies a quaint caricature of his own, behaved to him with a unique combination of mild toleration—or even deference—and of ironic brusqueness that might have puzzled a less simple person. He often spoke to his amiable little acquaintance with an openness and lack of reserve which he certainly would not have shown towards anyone of deeper intellectual perceptions; but Smillet accepted it all so

much as a matter-of-course, and of small importance at that, as quite to disarm mis-giving. He, moreover, delivered himself on all points with an unstudied bluntness that must occasionally have made Strome wince. But a really strong man enjoys receiving a fair home-thrust almost as much as giving one: it begets mutual confidence and respect.

"What is that you are working at so hard?" Smillet enquired, as Strome resumed his file and chisel, and applied himself again to the box.

"I'm working at my trade."

"No, you're not; preaching is your trade."

"Preaching is to be my profession: learn to discriminate your terms, Thomas Smillet. What a man does is not necessarily one with what he professes."

"Well, I always heard that to practise a trade is to do something you get paid for. Now you'll get paid for preaching, and you won't get paid for that thing—what is it? it smells nicely!—so I maintain that preaching is your trade."

"Good! Pity you didn't stick to preaching, Thomas; yours is the artless but pithy logic which belongs to the babe and suckling. Yes; I shall get paid for preaching, and paid well, too! Like twenty thousand other more or less needy gentlemen in England I shall, when asked whether I think in my heart that I am divinely called to the order and ministry of the priesthood, lay my hand over my pocket and reply, 'I think it.' Still, it's well to have two strings to one's bow, my Thomas."

"I say, Strome, a fellow like you—a really great man, you know—ought to get out of the habit of talking the way you do. It don't so much matter what you say to me, because I know you don't mean it, and when I thought of ordination, I knew it would be a lie that I should have to tell, and the thought of it bothered me so that I do believe I should have funk'd it when it came to the point, even if I hadn't inherited the—well, of course you've a right to grin, but I do believe so, really. But in your case, now, of course anybody can see that you are divinely called, if ever any man was, and so you've no business to pretend to make light of it in the way you do. What's the use of a great man except to be an example?—what I mean is, that's one of his uses. Besides, as for money, you'll be well enough off when you're—by-and-by, won't you?"

"By-and-by, perhaps," said Strome, blowing some sawdust out of a crevice. Presently he added: "What is your candid opinion, Smillet, of a man who marries a fortune?"

"I suppose you mean, what do I think of your marrying a fortune?"

"Well, then, what do you think of it?"

"Well, as to your case, of course I don't know any of the circumstances—any of the particulars; but, who ever the lady is, I think she's to be congratulated. She's got what no money can buy—that's a man of genius; and since you know you're a genius, and that money can't buy you, why I don't believe that any thought about her money ever entered your head, and I believe you engaged to marry her because you—because you loved each other, and that sort of thing!"

Strome eyed his plump little visitor out of his black eye, while his blue one seemed to be abstractedly weighing the value of his judgment. After a pause he said, clenching his teeth and smiling: "You have a genius for faith, Thomas; did you ever happen to move a mountain? But we were talking about carving. You see, a man must allow for vicissitudes. Suppose something were to happen to annul my marriage prospects and to compromise my ecclesiastical expectations. I should then have nothing but these tools to fall back on. The day may come when I shall have to carve children's toys for a living!"

"Oh, I daresay! I pity the children that go without toys until you make them some. Tell me something else!" squeaked Thomas gleefully. "By the look of things at the Mulberry last night, I shouldn't think money was what you'd ever need. I'm sure poor Culver doesn't think so. He says you won four hundred—"

"Hold your tongue, Thomas! Remember Mrs. Blister."

"My idea is, you know, you ought to give all that up—gambling and so on. Suppose it was to get out, where would you be?"

"At work on this box, of course."

"Oh, is that the something you were afraid might happen?"

"No."

Smillet crossed his legs and rubbed his hands up through his hair. "If you really don't feel inclined to go into the Church, Strome, why do you go?" he enquired. "There's enough else you could do; a fellow like you could do anything. You might be prime minister, or viceroy of

India, if you gave your mind to it; and then your gambling and that sort of thing would make less difference. There was Fox, for instance; he was a tremendous gambler, but he was a tremendous fellow in Parliament all the same."

"Why, did it never occur to you, Smillet, that the cause of Fox being such a tremendous gambler may have been that Parliament didn't give him excitement enough? We are not all of us so happily constituted as you, my trusty Tom; the demon in our brains demands employment or he will devour us. Now the one sole inexhaustible field for man or demon is the Church! One gets tired of other things. I can conceive that politics, or the army, or domestic bliss, or even the London season and the Mulberry Club, might pall upon a man in the course of ages. But the Church—never!"

All this was said by Strome with a certain picturesqueness of tone and facial expression which, more than anything else, had made people believe him handsome. There was also a greater than usual earnestness in his manner, though underlying all was the ineradicable affectation or self-consciousness which in a greater or less degree showed in his every word and act. It might be the affectation of a powerful mind; but there, at all events, it was. Tom Smillet threw up his nose, and, having snuffed a moment or two in silence, said:

"I can't make out whether you're joking or in earnest. If you're not in earnest, I think it is a poor joke; and if it's not a joke, I don't think it's to your credit. A fellow oughtn't to go into the Church just to keep himself amused. You'd better do like me!" concluded Thomas in his most imperturbable falsetto.

"Perhaps you're right, Tom; and the thing is not impossible. A wise man can become a fool, though the reverse is not true. But between being a Smillet and being a priest I see no other alternative for me. I should like to be a Jesuit."

"Come, I say! that's a Roman Catholic!"

"To show you the very bottom of my soul, Smillet—the Roman Catholic is the only genuine Church in existence! If I didn't know that the progress of Ritualism would save me the trouble, I'd go over at once. Ignatius Loyola! there was a man!"

"I won't sit still and hear such stuff!" declared Smillet, fixing his eyeglass with

immense decision. "I tell you what it is, Strome: your conversation is apt to be confoundingly stupid and objectionable, and I sometimes think it's odd how I and other fellows put up with it in the way we do. But it's the way you have of saying things that gets us; it doesn't seem to matter what you say. If I'd only heard another fellow tell me what you say, and hadn't seen you saying it myself, I should never have suspected there was anything great in you. I shouldn't, really."

"Upon my word, Tom, you are heroic this morning," said Strome, laughing; his laugh somewhat recalled his father's, and was his most agreeable manifestation. He relinquished his carving, and going to the cupboard beneath the writing-table, he brought out a bottle of wine and two glasses, which he filled. "Your visit has had such a good effect on me that I positively feel hospitable," he said. "Here's to the way you and I have of saying things; long may it continue to 'get them.' Have a cigarette?"

"Do you talk that way—about Jesuits and so on—to your governor?" demanded Smillet, after sipping his wine, and before lighting his cigarette.

"Let my governor alone, if you please," responded the other with sudden grimness.

"Are you going to be at the club to-night?"

"I don't know; but that fellow Fawley is coming, they say."

"Humph! I've been expecting him to turn up for some time past. I wonder whether he plays as good a hand at cards as when we were at Oxford?"

"You were great cronies at Oxford, weren't you?"

"Bosom friends, Thomas; we lived but for each other. Then came misunderstandings—coldness; and I became prematurely a sceptic and a sneering, cynical worldling; while he, being already a Jew, could do no more than remain what he was—unless he improved, that is to say. However, I mean to make it all up with him to-night."

"Oh, by-the-bye, what are you going to do between now and dinner? Because, if you like, I'll drive you round to my place to lunch, and then I've got tickets to hear Jenny Lind at three. Will you come?"

Strome did not immediately answer. He leant back in his chair, with his arms folded, and his black eye fixed upon his visitor. The peculiarity of Strome's double-barrelled gaze, which left its object in doubt whether he were being pointed at

or not, and which therefore took him in a comparatively defenceless state, was never able to disconcert Smillet, for the simple reason that he was too near-sighted to be aware of it. Strome, however, had no present idea of disconcerting him.

"Are you superstitious, Smillet?" he demanded.

"Superstitious!" cried Smillet, with genial scorn; "do I look like it?"

"Everybody is either superstitious or religious, you know," returned the other with a smile. "I confess I am inclined to be superstitious this morning. I am going to settle a question which may affect my whole future existence by an appeal to chance; and you, Thomas Smillet—tremble not—are to be the instrument of fate. Do you see this piece of paper?" he continued, holding up the anonymous letter.

"Well, what of it?"

"It is inscribed with certain mystic words, which render it as different from any other paper in the world as I, O Thomas, am different from you. I now, as you see, tear this magic scroll into two pieces of unequal length; I fold them up into small compass, and taking one in each hand, and holding my hands behind my back, I bid you declare whether the longer piece be in my right hand or in my left?"

Smillet, highly entertained with this fantastic preliminary, put himself in a judicial attitude, and prepared to choose. "Oh, wait a moment, though," he piped; "you haven't told me what's to happen in case I guess right?"

"In that case I accept your invitation to luncheon and Jenny Lind."

"Is that all? You said it would affect your whole future."

"You forget, Thomas, that by going with you I shall be prevented from going somewhere else. No more words—choose."

"Well, now," said Smillet, prodding himself with his eye-glass, and manifestly exhilarated by the importance of the crisis, "suppose, now—I mean, I choose—the right—no, I'll choose the left hand."

"Jenny Lind it is," said Strome, examining the two fragments of paper with a smile. "All right; that agrees with my own judgment, not that I really believe it makes a particle of odds, one way or the other."

He put the torn letter on the fire, and having exchanged his dressing-gown for out-door garments, he took his hat and one of his massive walking-sticks, and followed Smillet out of the room.

THE TENTH HUSSARS AND THE CABUL RIVER.

THE noyade of the Tenth Hussars in the Cabul River, on the night of March 31st, 1879, will not have been offered up in vain to the Nemesis that always overtakes human errors and backslidings, if we could only be certain that the military authorities would profit by the melancholy experience, and turn some of that attention, which they now devote so assiduously to book-tests and Kriegsspiele, to practical instruction in the various situations that constantly arise in war. The disaster by which Lieutenant Harford and forty-six troopers of a "crack" hussar regiment have been overwhelmed in an Afghan torrent, is not the first of the kind, as will be seen, that has happened to British cavalry during the course of a campaign, and it would be very pleasant to think that it will remain the last. But it is much to be feared that it will not be so, unless an un hoped-for access of wisdom should occur in high places. This particular accident, in all probability, could not have been altogether avoided by any human foresight, short of not crossing the river at all at night-time, and may be pretty safely said to belong to that class of risks which must always be encountered in war. *Chi non risica, non rosica*, as the Italians put it. It is, however, very possible to reduce the chances of such accidents occurring, and, at all events, to economise the loss to human life which attends all hazardous operations, by the exercise of a little common sense before and not after the event. It is unfortunate that the public interest cannot be sustained for more than nine days, and sometimes not even so long, on any one subject, however grave; and unless that interest can be kept sufficiently alert, so as to bring pressure to bear on the magnates of Whitehall and Pall Mall, there is little hope of ever seeing any thorough or intelligent reform in anything connected with the army. Unless the *vox populi* will it, any reform which does not commend itself to those who inherit and carry out the musty traditions of the Horse Guards, is well-nigh impossible. It is very obvious that the only way to reduce the chances of a recurrence of such disasters as that of the Cabul River to a reasonable minimum, is to insist that the men of all branches of the service should be rigorously instructed in the art of swimming, as part of their ordinary drill, and that the mounted

branches, and a certain proportion of each dismounted corps, should be taught how to cross rivers with horses. As has been recently remarked by the military critic of the leading journal, there are few officers in the service, and still fewer men, who have ever swum with a horse across a stream fifty yards in breadth. It is a feat that at any moment, on service, an orderly or even a whole regiment may be called on to perform; and yet this obviously necessary branch of a soldier's, and especially of a cavalry soldier's, education is in our army entirely neglected. In most of the Continental armies, swimming, mounted and dismounted, enters into the ordinary summer drills as an important part of the soldier's instruction. In the United Kingdom troops are now, as a rule, moved rapidly and luxuriously from one set of quarters to another by steamers or railways. There are few rivers of any magnitude in these islands, and all our streams, great and small, are spanned by numerous bridges. Even when a regiment marches to new quarters, the routes are everywhere so laid down as to utilise the bridges, as a matter of course, and thus obviate the necessity of our warriors wetting themselves or tarnishing their uniforms and accoutrements. Under these circumstances, the idea of teaching British soldiers how to cross rivers when neither a permanent bridge, nor the materials and skill for constructing a military one are available, has never entered into the heads of our authorities. They seem to have altogether left out of their calculations the fact that Great Britain is almost constantly at war in some quarter or other of the globe, and mostly—as befits “the pioneer of civilisation”—in those very quarters of it where bridges are unknown, and where the transport of pontoons, and other materials for making temporary bridges, is almost impossible, as in Zululand. This important branch of a soldier's training was not, however, always thus neglected in our army. During the course of the great Continental wars of the last century and the beginning of the present, when British troops were campaigning in Germany, the Low Countries, and the Peninsula, our horsemen were frequently exercised in crossing their native streams, in order to prepare them for the sterner realities of war abroad; and it has been lately recalled to mind that the light troop of the Scots Greys, a hundred years ago, were constantly employed in cross-

ing and recrossing the Thames above Maidenhead.

History presents us with innumerable instances of large bodies of horsemen crossing rivers of greater or lesser depth. No river from the Amoor to the Volga, or from the Indus to the Danube, ever checked the career of the hordes of warriors, for the most part mounted, who followed Attila, Chingiz, Hologon, Batu, or Timoor-i-Lung; and the mail-clad Crusaders crossed many a stream of Asia Minor and Syria, on the march to Palestine, with trifling loss, though Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa met his fate in one of them. But, as a rule, both Scythian nomad and Christian knight divested himself of the heavier portions of his chain or plate-mail, before trusting himself to the mercies of any deep or obstructive torrent. It may, too, be reasonably assumed that Sir Walter Scott indulged in considerable poetic license when he made “Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,” even although mounted on “the wightest steed” in Branksome stables, during his midnight ride to Melrose, perform that wonderful feat in natation,

Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.

The stark moss-trooper's exploit, albeit savouring more of romance and poetry than reality, is so spiritedly described by the poet-laureate of his clan, that it will bear quotation, even if it only serves to show the almost impossible nature of it:

At the first plunge the horse sank low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Lady's grace,
At length he gain'd the landing-place.

To anyone who has ever had to swim a river on horseback in the ordinary attire of a white man of the present day, the foregoing account sounds very much like one of those tales that are only to be told to the marines. A modern troop-horse, encumbered with his rider, his rider's and his own paraphernalia, would find it a difficult matter enough to keep only his nostrils out of water; and how the “dapple-grey steed” of Deloraine, “barded” or enveloped as he was in defensive armour “from counter to tail,” and bestridden by

a stalwart mail-clad riever, ever managed to rise again after that "first plunge," is one of those things that only a poet can evolve out of his inner consciousness, or pretend to understand.

When rivers have to be crossed, it is, of course, the duty of the Intelligence Department to seek out a practicable ford or fords, and to obtain all the information possible concerning them. Where fords do not exist, boats, rafts, &c., may be employed, but these can rarely be found or made in sufficient numbers to ferry over a considerable body of troops where celerity and secrecy are required. Time and circumstances, moreover, may not permit of a pontoon or flying-bridge being thrown over. In such cases there is nothing for it, so far as cavalry are concerned, except swimming. But even where fords are pronounced practicable, the passage of a cavalry regiment, where the stream is broad or turbulent, is attended with risk. Macaulay, in his work on Military Reconnaissance, &c., says: "Fords should not be deeper than three feet for infantry, four feet for cavalry, and two and a half feet for artillery and ammunition waggons. If a ford be situated where the current is rapid, its depth should be diminished in proportion, from half to one foot for cavalry, and from nine inches to one and a half feet for infantry. Having reconnoitred a ford, it will be prudent to plant upright pickets in the stream, notched to show the variation of the depth at different times. In mountainous countries these variations will be considerable in winter; large stones are also frequently found in fords among hills, rendering the passage difficult for cavalry, insurmountable for carriages. In sandy countries, and where alluvial deposits are frequent, fords may be found for infantry in small numbers, but impracticable for cavalry, more so for carriages; sometimes appearing to have a firm and solid bed, but proving, on critical examination, soft and shifting. The best have a gravelly bottom. Great care must be taken in the examination of fords across streams or rivers threading a morass or boggy district. A brown, rushy bottom may generally be trusted; but bright green spots are more delusive. A row of pickets planted on either side of the ford, and retained by cordage, will be found useful, as well in the crossing as for the indication of its direction. When a river offers a ford of sufficient width, and the stream

is rapid, it is sometimes expedient to use the cavalry to cut the current of the water obliquely, and make the infantry cross lower down." It is one thing to lay down a regulation depth of water for the various arms of the service, and another to find all fords sufficiently accommodating in this respect, for a four-foot ford for horsemen would obviously be too much for the passage of guns, which would have to seek another ford, or be transported across in boats, or on rafts or bridges. In the rivers of India and Afghanistan, which take their rise amid the snows and glaciers of the Himalaya and Hindoo Koosh, an additional danger lurks in the sudden freshets or "spates" to which they are liable at certain times of the year; and to these freshets must, in a great measure, be ascribed the catastrophes which overtook the Tenth Hussars the other day, as well as the Sixteenth Hussars nearly forty years ago.

When fords are impracticable or non-existent, recourse must be had to swimming. The well-known and accomplished Nolan, who had served in the Austrian cavalry before entering that of his own country, says in his *Cavalry Tactics*: "Rivers should not stop cavalry. There are plenty of examples of cavalry swimming rivers without loss. For instance, the night before the battle of Hastembach, three hundred horsemen, with as many foot soldiers, were detached from the camp of the Duc de Broglie, and swam the Weser, the foot soldiers holding on to the horses' manes. Again, twenty-four squadrons of Austrian cuirassiers swam the river Main on the 3rd of September, 1796, leaving the bridge for the use of the infantry." But the Main, at the point of crossing, had not a particularly rapid current; the force of it, such as it was, being broken by the bridge aforesaid, above the place where the cuirassiers crossed. The cuirasses, back-pieces, and jack-boots, moreover, were laid aside before the passage commenced.

Officers and colonists who may be fairly admitted to be experts in the matter, have stated their theories as to the best mode of swimming with horses. There appears to be some little divergence in the opinions as to which is the best mode, but like most other things in this world, it probably depends on circumstances, and experience gained from frequent practice. In crossing a ford, a trooper, at present, keeps his saddle till the last moment, because his

weight, with that of his accoutrements, helps to steady the horse on its legs; but when crossing a deep river, he first ties the bit and bridoon reins in a loose knot, and then, knowing that a horse turns on its right side to swim, he glides off on the off side, seizes the mane with his right hand, and throwing himself backwards flat on the water, is thus towed to shore. The horse rarely requires guidance, but should it do so, the slightest touch on the rein on either side suffices. Some writers advocate the rider's holding on by the mane, others by the tail, while it is generally admitted that keeping the seat in the saddle, though better in some respects than other methods, is very distressing to both man and beast, which is a grave objection in a long swim. As Colonel Manderson of the Royal Artillery, however, justly points out: it is all very well to talk about holding on by the mane or the tail; but what is to be done when, as in the case of the Tenth Hussars in the Câbul river, the horses have got neither manes nor tails to speak of which can be clutched? As often happens in a long and trying campaign, very few troop-horses at the present moment in Afghanistan have any manes left, except near the ears; the remainder, with the best portion of their tails, having been rubbed off by the friction of their blankets, which cover them from ears to tail.

The hazardous nature of crossing a mountain-fed stream, and more especially at night, may be more vividly present to the reader after a description of the river of Câbul, or Jui Shir, which is the only great tributary of the Indus from the west, draining the district of Logurh, the valley of Câbul, the Sufaid Koh (White Mountains), and the southern slope of the Hindoo Koosh. It is generally supposed to rise at Sir-i-Chusmuh (Spring Head), at an altitude of eight thousand four hundred feet above the sea. Here a very copious spring bursts out of the ground, forming the chief source of the principal stream; but the extreme head is about twelve miles farther west on the eastern slope of the Oonna ridge; and in its course it is joined by many tributaries from much higher regions. It is, in the beginning of its career, an inconsiderable stream, everywhere fordable, for sixty miles as far as the city of Câbul, a short distance beyond which it receives the Logurh from the south, and thenceforward has a rapid current of four to five miles an hour with

a great body of water. Forty miles below Câbul it receives from the north the Punjshir, which has a course of one hundred and twenty miles and brings a large accession of water, draining the Kohistân of Câbul and the adjacent sides of the Hindoo Koosh. About fifteen miles below this point the Tagoa, also from the Hindoo Koosh, with a course of eighty miles, joins it from the north. From the Hindoo Koosh again, some twenty miles farther down, it receives the united waters of the Alishang and Alingar, each after a career of about one hundred and twenty miles. Another twenty miles and the Soorkh Rood, or Red River, falls into it from the south after a north-easterly course of seventy miles. As this affluent drains the northern slopes of the lofty Sufaid Koh, it shoots along with great rapidity, and discharges a considerable bulk of water. Twenty miles farther on its eastward course, the Câbul is joined by the Koonur, or Kamah; which, after rising in Chitral, on the southern declivity of the Hindoo Koosh, and flowing through the mysterious Kafiristân, after a run of two hundred and twenty miles tumbles into the main drain a few miles beyond Jellalabad. At the ford above this last junction the Eleventh Bengal Lancers and the Tenth Hussars made the memorable passage. It can be imagined that, after all these accessions, the Câbul becomes a large stream, sweeping with prodigious velocity and violence along the northern base of the Khaibar Mountains; and, in consequence of its boiling eddies and furious surges, not navigable except on rafts of hides, and especially dangerous for the transit of heavily encumbered horsemen. Sir Alexander Burnes, on his return to India from his mission to Câbul, in May, 1838, instead of rethreading the Khaibar Pass, went down the Câbul River, from Jellalabad to the Indus, on a raft. He says: "The excitement in descending the river of Câbul is greater than the danger; nevertheless, much care and dexterity are required to avoid the projecting rocks and the whirlpools which they form. We were caught in one of them called Fuzl. One raft revolved in it for two hours; and it was only extricated by the united exertions of the crews of other rafts. The Camel's Neck, or the far-famed Shootur-Gurdun, presented an appearance, as we approached it, so grand and impressive, that it will never be effaced from memory. We had dropped down the river for half an hour under

heavy clouds, precipitous rocks rose some thousand feet high on either side, and the stream was deep and glassy. At length we saw, at the termination of a long vista which lay before us, the water boiling, or rather heaving itself up. Before we reached this point the rain fell in torrents, the lightning flashed, and tremendous claps of thunder reverberated from cliff to cliff. In the midst of the storm we passed down the rapids, the water dashing wildly upon us, and the wind roaring and hissing through the chasm. The scene altogether was sublime, almost terrific." No doubt the luckless squadron of the Tenth, or a part of it, missing the direct line of the ford, and getting into deep water, was involved in one of these eddies, or whirlpools, aggravated by a sudden freshet.

A very similar catastrophe to that which has happened to the Tenth Hussars befell the Sixteenth Lancers some forty years ago, when crossing the River Jhelum on their return with Lord Keane and the head-quarters of the Army of the Indus from Afghanistan. In traversing the Panjab (which did not then belong to the British Indian Empire) on their way from Peshawur to Ferozepore, one of our frontier cantonments in those days, the troops under Lord Keane had to cross the Jhelum among other rivers. This river runs close past the town of the same name from east to west. The ford lies about three-quarters of a mile higher up the stream to the eastward, and there is a village about half a mile from the town between it and the ford. From a point a little above the village, the ford takes a diagonal direction to the right down the river to the centre, and then takes another diagonal course up-stream; so that the ford describes two sides of a triangle, which, where the two sides meet, points down the current; the landing-places being opposite to each other on the north and south banks of the river. The ferry is close to the town, where there were twenty large and six small boats. The river, opposite to the town, was about three hundred yards wide, but on account of the zig-zag direction taken by the ford, the actual distance from bank to bank was about five hundred yards. The water was more than three feet deep, very cold, and with a strong current near the south bank. From the report of the duffadar (native non-commissioned officer of cavalry), who had been sent on some days before, the depth of water was said to be up to the

middle of a man, and was, therefore, not considered too deep for cavalry to ford. But since the duffadar had crossed, the river must have risen, for it fell full eighteen inches in one night, disclosing a sandbank in the morning which had been invisible the day before. This fall at that time of the year could only have been occasioned by a previous sudden freshet, since, in the cold season, rivers, as a rule, are not given to fall suddenly. There was a further fall of six inches the day after. From information that had also been obtained from Lieutenant Conolly, whose party had crossed eighteen days before, it was concluded that the ford was quite practicable. The adjutant of the Sixteenth—one of the Havelocks, and a brother of the late Sir Henry—had ridden across and returned, reporting the ford practicable. Stakes were driven in to mark its course, and the provost-sergeant, by general order of the day previous, was posted at its entrance with his detachment to see that the camels were sent across in the order that they came up to the bank, and that no crowding occurred. The regiment, after a march of twelve miles from Rhotas, arrived near the town of Jhelum about half-past eight o'clock on the morning of December 11th, 1839. Soon after, it entered the ford by threes, and passed to the middle of the stream without accident. There, however, the guiding stakes were lost to view by the interposition of a line of camels then crossing over. The leading troopers tried to pass these beasts by going beyond them; but they went unfortunately to the right, and lower down the stream, by which they immediately got into deep water and the full strength of the current, and the horses were forced to swim. From the banks it was peculiarly distressing to witness the struggles that ensued. Horse after horse with its rider disappeared and suddenly rose again, and the impression on the minds of the spectators was that a troop at least would be lost. Boats were despatched to the scene of the disaster, but could not arrive in time to save many. The remainder of the regiment crossed over quite safely by taking the ford to the left and up-stream. On mustering the corps it was found that Captain Hilton, a corporal, and nine troopers, with their horses, were missing. The bodies of the captain and of four of the men were recovered, and buried close to the camp, opposite the town of Jhelum; a monument

being subsequently erected on the spot by the regiment. Lieut.-Colonel Cureton, commanding the regiment, who was afterwards killed at Ramnuggur in the second Sikh War, was nearly drowned by his charger taking fright at some camels and falling back in the water, thus compelling him to swim, hampered with his sword, and cap fastened under his chin. Lieutenant Pattie, now a lieutenant-general, had a very narrow escape, and was saved by Trooper Dobbin. Lord Keane was soon on the spot, and remained for some time, visibly affected by the sad scene. Neither men nor horses had any chance of saving themselves by swimming; hampered as the former were by their chin-straps, swords, and accoutrements, and the latter fettered by their bridles, martingales, and trappings. The horses, moreover, were tired and heated by a long march, and neither they nor their riders ought to have been allowed to enter the cold stream when they did. The thermometer at five o'clock in the morning had marked forty degrees; and the waters of the Jhelum, at the ford, have only a course of some forty miles from the snows of Cashmere in winter. Several men died subsequently from the effects of the immersion in the icy stream.

Two days afterwards, on December 13th, taught by the melancholy experience of the Sixteenth Lancers, the old Third Bengal Native Light Cavalry crossed over at three o'clock in the afternoon, in order that the sowars and horses should not suffer from the cold water in the morning after their long march. The thermometer that morning at five o'clock stood at twenty-two degrees in the open air, and at half-past eight at thirty-six degrees. The water of the river was scarcely warmed at the surface by the sun, and the day was very cold. The officers were ordered by Lord Keane to cross in boats, together with all the sowars who could not swim. The horses crossed in watering order, the saddles and trappings being sent over in boats. The horses of each troop passed over singly with a horse's length between each, and each troop was led by a guide procured from the town. The assistant-quartermaster-general, Lieutenant, now General Sir Arthur Becher, was sent with boats to station them in a position on each side of the centre point of the river near the ford, to prevent any horses, camels, or elephants passing below the line of demarcation, and the river was re-staked. The horses did at times get into deep water, but there was no accident,

though one was threatened at a moment when two or three elephants belonging to Lena Singh, the Sikh Mehmandar, were driven recklessly straight across the river, at the imminent risk of causing a stampede among the horses.

The foregoing details afford some points of comparison with the particulars, so far as they are yet known, of the disaster of the 31st March last. That accident, as has already been said, could not probably have been altogether avoided by any human foresight, unless the passage had been postponed till daylight, which perhaps the exigencies of the situation would not allow. The lancers crossed the Jhelum with ordinary precautions, ending in the loss of eleven valuable lives; while the Third Bengal Light Cavalry, with extraordinary safeguards, crossed without the loss of a man. The hussars were very unfortunate; whereas the native corps brigaded with them, the Eleventh Bengal Lancers—both curiously the Prince of Wales's regiments—who in this case preceded their British comrades, were very lucky. The Sixteenth crossed in daylight with a staked ford; the Tenth at night, when a staked ford would have been of little use. One sage military critic of the press has laid it down, *ex cathedra*, that the ford ought to have been lighted with torches—a singular notion; for the object of crossing at all in the night was secrecy, which would have been obviously defeated by the proposed illumination. The principal causes of the grief in the *Câbul*, as in the Jhelum, were without doubt sudden freshets, the icy current, and the hampered conditions under which both men and horses were sent into the water, aggravated in the case of the Tenth by the boulders, eddies, and darkness.

SONG.

STAY, sweet day, for thou art fair,
Fair, and full, and calm;
Crowned through all thy golden hours,
With Love's freshest, purest flowers,
Strong in Faith's unshaken powers,
Rich in Hope's bright balm.

Stay, what chance and change may wait,
As you glide away;
Now is all so glad and bright.
Now we breathe in sure delight!
Now we smile in Fate's despite.
Stay with us, sweet day.

Ah! she cannot, may not stop;
All things must decay;
So with head, and heart, and will,
Take the joy that lingers still,
Take the pause in strife and ill,
Prize the passing day.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLVII. OVER THE SUMMER SEA.

RORIE and Vixen left the battlements and descended the narrow stairs, and went side by side, through sunlit fields and lanes, to the old manor-house, happy with that unutterable, immeasurable joy which belongs to happy love, and to love only; whether it be the romantic passion of a Juliet leaning from her balcony, the holy bliss of a mother hanging over her child's cradle, or the sober affection of the wife who has seen the dawn and close of a silver wedding, and yet loves on with love unchangeable—a monument of constancy in an age of easy divorce.

The distance was long; but to these two the walk was of the shortest. It was as if they trod on flowers or airy cloud, so lightly fell their footsteps on the happy earth.

What would Miss Skipwith say? Vixen laughed merrily at the image of that cheated lady.

"To think that all my Egyptian researches should end in—Antony!" she said, with a joyous look at her lover, who required to be informed which Antony she meant.

"I remember him in Plutarch," he said. "He was a jolly fellow."

"And in Shakespeare."

"Connais pas," said Rorie. "I've read some of Shakespeare's plays, of course, but not all. He wrote too much."

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when they arrived at Les Tourelles. They had loitered a little in those sunny lanes, stopping to look seaward through a gap in the hedge, or to examine a fern which was like the ferns of Hampshire. They had such a world of lovers' nonsense to say to each other, such confessions of past unhappiness, such schemes of future bliss.

"I'm afraid you'll never like Briarwood as well as the Abbey House," said Rorie humbly. "I tried my best to patch it up for Lady Mabel; for you see, as I felt I fell short in the matter of affection, I wanted to do the right thing in furniture and decorations. But the house is lamentably modern and commonplace. I'm afraid you'll never be happy there."

"Rorie, I could be happy with you if our home were no better than the charcoal-burner's hut in Mark Ash," protested Vixen.

"It's very good of you to say that. Do

you like sage-green?" Rorie asked with a doubtful air.

"Pretty well. It reminds me of mamma's dressmaker, Madame Theodore."

"Because Mabel insisted upon having sage-green curtains and chair-covers, and a sage-green wall with a chocolate dado—did you ever hear of a dado?—in the new morning-room I built for her. I'm rather afraid you won't like it; I should have preferred pink or blue myself, and no dado. It looks so much as if one had run short of wall-paper. But it can all be altered by-and-by, if you don't like it."

They found Miss Skipwith pacing the weedy gravel walk in front of her parlour window, with a disturbed air, and a yellow envelope in her hand.

"My dear, this has been an eventful day," she exclaimed. "I have been very anxious for your return. Here is a telegram for you; and as it is the first you have had since you have been staying here, I conclude it is of some importance."

Vixen took the envelope eagerly from her hand.

"If you were not standing by my side, a telegram would frighten me," she whispered to Roderick. "It might tell me you were dead."

The telegram was from Captain Winstanley to Miss Tempest:

"Come home by the next boat. Your mother is ill, and anxious to see you. The carriage will meet you at Southampton."

Poor Vixen looked at her lover with a conscience-stricken countenance.

"Oh, Rorie, and I have been so wickedly, wildly happy!" she cried, as if it were a crime to have so rejoiced. "And I made so light of mamma's last letter, in which she complained of being ill. I hardly gave it a thought."

"I don't suppose there is anything very wrong," said Rorie, in a comforting tone, after he had studied those few bold words in the telegram, trying to squeeze the utmost meaning out of the brief sentence. "You see, Captain Winstanley does not say that your mother is dangerously ill, or even very ill; he only says ill. That might mean something quite insignificant—hay-fever, or neuralgia, or a nervous headache."

"But he tells me to go home—he who hates me, and was so glad to get me out of the house."

"It is your mother who summons you home, no doubt. She is mistress in her own house, of course."

"You would not say that if you knew Captain Winstanley."

They were alone together on the gravel walk, Miss Skipwith having retired to make the tea in her dingy parlour. It had dawned upon her that this visitor of Miss Tempest's was no common friend; and she had judiciously left the lovers together. "Poor misguided child!" she murmured to herself pityingly; "just as she was developing a vocation for serious things! But perhaps it is all for the best. I doubt if she would ever have had breadth of mind to grapple with the great problems of natural religion."

"Isn't it dreadful?" said Vixen, walking up and down with the telegram in her hand. "I shall have to endure hours of suspense before I can know how my poor mother is. There is no boat till to-morrow morning. It's no use talking, Rorie." Mr. Vawdrey was following her up and down the walk affectionately, but not saying a word. "I feel convinced that mamma must be seriously ill; I should not be sent for unless it were so. In all her letters there has not been a word about my going home. I was not wanted."

"But, dearest love, you know that your mother is apt to think seriously of trifles."

"Rorie, you told me an hour ago that she was looking ill when last you saw her."

Roderick looked at his watch.

"There is one thing I might do," he said musingly. "Has Miss Skipwith a horse and trap?"

"Not the least bit in the world."

"That's a pity; it would have saved time. I'll get down to St. Helier's somehow, telegraph to Captain Winstanley to enquire the exact state of your mother's health, and not come back till I bring you his answer."

"Oh, Rorie, that would be good of you!" exclaimed Vixen. "But it seems too cruel to send you away like that; you have been travelling so long. You have had nothing to eat. You must be dreadfully tired."

"Tired? Have I not been with you? There are some people whose presence makes one unconscious of humanity's weaknesses. No, darling, I am neither tired nor hungry; I am only ineffably happy. I'll go down and set the wires in motion; and then I'll find out all about the steamer for to-morrow morning, and we'll go back to Hampshire together."

And again the rejoicing lover quoted the Laureate:

"And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold;
And far across the hills they went,
In that new world which is the old."

Rorie had to walk all the way to St. Helier's. He despatched an urgent message to Captain Winstanley, and then dined temperately at a French restaurant not far from the quay, where the bon vivants of Jersey are wont to assemble nightly. When he had dined he walked about the harbour, looking at the ships, and watching the lights begin to glimmer from the barrack-windows, and the straggling street along the shore, and the far-off beacons shining out, as the rosy sunset darkened to purple night.

He went to the office two or three times before the return message had come; but at last it was handed to him, and he read it by the office-lamp:

"Captain Winstanley, Abbey House, Hampshire, to Mr. Vawdrey, St. Helier's."

"My wife is seriously ill, but in no immediate danger. The doctors order extreme quiet; all agitation is to be carefully avoided. Let Miss Tempest bear this in mind when she comes home."

Roderick drove back to Les Tourelles with this message, which was in some respects reassuring, or at any rate afforded a certainty less appalling than Violet's measureless fears.

Vixen was sitting on the pilgrim's bench beside the manor-house gateway, watching for her lover's return. Oh, happy lover, to be thus watched for and thus welcomed; thrice, nay, a thousandfold happy in the certainty that she was his own for ever! He put his arm round her, and they wandered along the shadowy lane together, between dewy banks of tangled verdure, luminous with glow-worms. The stars were shining above the overarching roof of foliage, the harvest moon was rising over the distant sea.

"What a beautiful place Jersey is!" exclaimed Vixen innocently, as she strolled lower down the lane, circled by her lover's arm. "I had no idea it was half so lovely. But then, of course, I was never allowed to roam about in the moonlight. And, indeed, Rorie, I think we had better go in directly. Miss Skipwith will be wondering."

"Let her wonder, love. I can explain everything when we go in. She was young herself once upon a time, though one would

hardly give her credit for it; and you may depend she has walked in this lane by moonlight. Yes; by the light of that very same sober old moon, who has looked down with the same indulgent smile upon endless generations of lovers."

"From Adam and Eve to Antony and Cleopatra," suggested Vixen, who couldn't get Egypt out of her head.

"Antony and Cleopatra were middle-aged lovers," said Rorie. "The moon must have despised them. Youth is the only season when love is wisdom, Vixen. In later life it means folly and drivelling, wrinkles badly hidden under paint, pencilled eyebrows, and false hair. Aphrodite should be for ever young."

"Perhaps that's why the poor thing puts on paint and false hair when she finds youth departed," said Vixen.

"Then she is no longer Aphrodite, but a wicked old harridan," answered Rorie.

And then he began to sing, with a rich full voice that rolled far upon the still air:

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And whilst ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry."

"What a fine voice you have, Rorie!" cried Vixen.

"Have I really? I thought it was only Lord Mallow who could sing. Do you know that I was desperately jealous of that nobleman once—when I fancied he was singing himself into your affections. Little did I think that he was destined to become my greatest benefactor."

"I shall make you sing duets with me, sir, by-and-by."

"You shall make me stand on my head, or play clown in an amateur pantomime, or do anything ridiculous, if you like. 'Being your slave what can I do——'"

"Yes, you must sing Mendelssohn with me. I would that my Love, and Greeting."

"I have only one idea of greeting, after a cruel year of parting and sadness," said Rorie, drawing the bright young face to his own, and covering it with kisses.

Again Vixen urged that Miss Skipwith would be wondering; and this time with such insistence, that Rorie was obliged to turn back and ascend the hill.

"How cruel it is of you to snatch a soul out of Elysium," he remonstrated. "I felt as if I was lost in some happy dream—wandering down this path, which leads I

know not where, into a dim wooded vale, such as the fairies love to inhabit?"

"The road leads down to the inn at Le Tac, where Cockney excursionists go to eat lobsters and play skittles," said Vixen, laughing at her lover.

They went back to the manor-house, where they found Miss Skipwith annotating a tremendous manuscript on blue foolscap, a work whose outward semblance would have been enough to frighten and deter any publisher in his right mind.

"How late you are, Violet," she said, looking up dreamily from her manuscript; "I have been re-writing and polishing portions of my essay on Buddha. The time has flown, and I had no idea of the hour till Doddery came in just now to ask if he could shut up the house. And then I remembered that you had gone out to the gate to watch for Mr. Vawdrey."

"I'm afraid you must think our goings on rather eccentric," Rorie began shyly; "but, perhaps, Vix— Miss Tempest has told you what old friends we are; that, in fact, I am quite the oldest friend she has. I came to Jersey on purpose to ask her to marry me, and she has been good enough"—smiling blissfully at Vixen, who tried to look daggers at him—"to say Yes."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Miss Skipwith, looking much alarmed; "this is very embarrassing. I am so unversed in such matters. My life has been given up to study, far from the haunts of man. My nephew informed me that there was a kind of—in point of fact, a flirtation between Miss Tempest and a gentleman in Hampshire, of which he highly disapproved, the gentleman being engaged to marry his cousin."

"It was I," cried Rorie, "but there was no flirtation between Miss Tempest and me. Whoever asserted such a thing was a slanderer and—I won't offend you by saying what he was, Miss Skipwith. There was no flirtation. I was Miss Tempest's oldest friend—her old play-fellow, and we liked to see each other, and were always friendly together. But it was an understood thing that I was to marry my cousin. It was Miss Tempest's particular desire that I should keep an engagement made beside my mother's death-bed. If Miss Tempest had thought otherwise, I should have been at her feet. I would have flung that engagement to the winds; for Violet Tempest is the only woman I ever loved. And now all the world may know it, for my cousin has jilted me, and I am a free man."

"Good gracious! Can I really believe this?" asked Miss Skipwith, appealing to Violet.

"Rorie never told a falsehood in his life," Vixen answered proudly.

"I feel myself in a most critical position, my dear child," said Miss Skipwith, looking from Roderick's frank eager face to Vixen's downcast eyelids and mantling blushes. "I had hoped such a different fate for you. I thought the thirst for knowledge had arisen within you, that the aspiration to distinguish yourself from the ruck of ignorant women would follow the arising of that thirst, in natural sequence. And here I find you willing to marry a gentleman who happens to have been the companion of your childhood, and to resign—for his sake—all hopes of distinction."

"My chances of distinction were so small, dear Miss Skipwith," faltered Vixen. "If I had possessed your talents!"

"True," sighed the reformer of all the theologies. "We have not all the same gifts. There was a day when I thought it would be my lot to marry and subside into the dead level of domesticity; but I am thankful to think I escaped the snare."

"And the gentleman who wanted to marry you, how thankful must he be!" thought Rorie dumbly.

"Yet there have been moments of depression when I have been weak enough to regret those early days," sighed Miss Skipwith. "At best our strength is tempered with weakness. It is the fate of genius to be lonely. And now I suppose I am to lose you, Violet?"

"I am summoned home to poor mamma," said Vixen.

"And after poor mamma has recovered, as I hope she speedily may, Violet will be wanted by her poor husband," said Rorie. "You must come across the sea and dance at our wedding, Miss Skipwith."

"Ah," sighed Miss Skipwith, "if you could but have waited for the establishment of my universal church, what a grand ceremonial your marriage might have been!"

Miss Skipwith, though regretful, and inclined to take a dismal view of the marriage state and its responsibilities under the existing dispensation, was altogether friendly. She had a frugal supper of cold meat and salad, bread and cheese, and cyder, served in honour of Mr. Vawdrey, and they three sat till midnight talking happily—Miss Skipwith of theology, the other two of themselves and the smiling

future, and such an innocent forest life as Rosalind and Orlando may have promised themselves, when they were deep in love, and the banished duke's daughter sighed for no wider kingdom than a shepherd's hut in the woodland, with the lover of her choice.

There were plenty of spare bedrooms at the manor-house; but so bare and empty, so long abandoned of human occupants, as to be fit only for the habitation of mice and spiders, stray bat or wandering owl. So Roderick had to walk down the hill again to St. Helier's, where he found hospitality at an hotel. He was up betimes, too happy to need much sleep, and at seven o'clock he and Vixen were walking in the dewy garden, planning the wonderful life they were to lead at Briarwood, and all the good they were to do. Happiness was to radiate from their home, as heat from the sun. The sick, and the halt, and the lame were to come to Briarwood, as they had come to the Abbey House before Captain Winstanley's barren rule of economy.

"God has been so good to us, Rorie," said Vixen, nestling at her lover's side. "Can we ever be good enough to others?"

"We'll do our best, anyhow, little one," he answered gently. "I am not like Mallow; I've no grand ideas about setting my native country in order, and doing away with the poor laws; but I've always tried to make the people round me happy, and to keep them out of the workhouse and the county jail."

They went to the court-yard where poor Argus lived his life of isolation, and they told him they were going to be married, and that his pathway henceforward would be strewn with roses, or at all events Spratt's biscuits. He was particularly noisy and demonstrative, and appeared to receive this news with a wild rapture that was eminently encouraging, doing his best to knock Roderick down in the tumult of his delight. The lovers and the dog were alike childish in their infinite happiness, unthinking beings of the present hour, too happy to look backward or forward, this little space of time called "now" holding all things needful for delight.

These are the rare moments of life, to which the heart of man cries: "Oh, stay, thou art so beautiful!" and could the death-bell toll then, and doom come then, life would end in a glorious euthanasia.

Violet's portmanteaux were packed. All was ready. There would be just time for a hurried breakfast with Miss Skipwith, and then the fly from St. Helier's would

be at the gate to carry the exile on the first stage of the journey home.

"Poor mamma!" sighed Vixen. "How wicked of me to feel so happy when she is ill."

And then Rorie comforted her with kindly-meant sophistries. Mrs. Winstanley's indisposition was doubtless more an affair of the nerves than a real illness. She would be cheered and revived immediately by her daughter's return.

"How could she suppose she would be able to live without you!" cried Rorie. "I know I found life hard to bear."

"Yet you bore it for more than a year with admirable patience," retorted Vixen, laughing at him; "and I do not find you particularly-altered and emaciated."

"Oh, I used to eat and drink," said Rorie, with a look of self-contempt. "I'm afraid I'm a horribly low-minded brute. I used even to enjoy my dinner sometimes, after a long country ride; but I could never make you understand what a bore life was to me all last year, how the glory and enjoyment seemed to have gone out of existence. The dismal monotony of my days weighed upon me like a nightmare. Life had become a formula. I felt like a sick man who has to take so many doses of medicine, so many pills, so many basins of broth, in the twenty-four hours. There was no possible resistance. The sick nurse was there, in the shape of Fate, ready to use brute force if I rebelled. I never did rebel. I assure you, Vixen, I was a model lover. Mabel and I had not a single quarrel. I think that is a proof that we did not care a straw for each other."

"You and I will have plenty of quarrels," said Vixen. "It will be so nice to make friends again."

Now came the hurried breakfast—a cup of tea drunk standing, not a crumb eaten—agitated adieux to Miss Skipwith, who wept very womanly tears over her departing charge, and uttered good wishes in a choking voice. Even the Dodderys seemed to Vixen more human than usual, now that she was going to leave them, in all likelihood for ever. Miss Skipwith came to the gate to see the travellers off, and ascended the pilgrim's bench in order to have the latest view of the fly. From this eminence she waved her handkerchief as a farewell salutation.

"Poor soul!" sighed Vixen; "she has never been unkind to me; but oh! what a dreary life I have led in that dismal old house!"

They had Argus in the fly with them, sitting up, with his mouth open, and his tail flapping against the bottom of the vehicle in perpetual motion. He kept giving his paw first to Vixen and then to Rorie, and exacted a great deal of attention, insomuch that Mr. Vawdrey exclaimed:

"Vixen, if you don't keep that dog within bounds, I shall think him a great nuisance as a stepson. I offered to marry you, you know, not you and your dog."

"You are very rude!" cried Vixen.

"You don't expect me to be polite, I hope. What is the use of marrying one's old playfellow if one cannot be uncivil to her now and then? To me you will always be the tawny-haired little girl I used to tease."

"Who used to tease you, you mean. You were very meek in those days."

Oh, what a happy voyage that was, over the summer sea! They sat side by side upon the bridge, sheltered from wind and sun, and talked the happy nonsense lovers talk: but which can hardly be so sweet between lovers whose youth and childhood have been spent far apart, as between these two who had been reared amidst the same sylvan world, and had every desire and every thought in unison. How brief the voyage seemed. It was but an hour or so since Roderick had been buying peaches and grapes, as they lay at the end of the pier at Guernsey, and here were the Needles and the chalky cliffs and undulating downs of the Wight. The Wight! That meant Hampshire and home!

"How often those downs have been our weather-glass, Rorie, when we have been riding across the hills between Lyndhurst and Beaulieu," said Vixen.

She had a world of questions to ask him about all that had happened during her exile. She almost expected to hear that Lyndhurst steeple had fallen; that the hounds had died of old age; that the Knightwood Oak had been struck by lightning; or that some among those calamities which time naturally brings had befallen the surroundings of her home. It was the strangest thing in the world to hear that nothing had happened, that everything was exactly the same as it had been when she went away. That dreary year of exile had seemed long enough for earthquakes and destructions, or even for slow decay.

"Do you know what became of Arion?" asked Vixen, almost afraid to shape the question.

"Oh, I believe he was sold, soon after you left home," Rorie answered carelessly.

"Sold," echoed Vixen drearily. "Poor dear thing! Yes, I felt sure Captain Winstanley would sell him. But I hoped——"

"What?"

"That someone I knew might buy him. Lord Mallow perhaps."

"Lord Mallow! Ah, you thought he would buy the horse, for the love of the rider. But you see constancy isn't one of that noble Irishman's virtues. He loves and he rides away—when the lady won't have him. No, Arion was sent up to Tattersall's, and disposed of in the usual way. Some fellow bought him for a covert hack."

"I hope the man wasn't a heavy weight," exclaimed Vixen, almost in tears.

She thought Rorie was horribly unfeeling.

"What does it matter? A horse must earn his salt."

"I had rather my poor pet had been shot, and buried in one of the meadows at home," said Vixen plaintively.

"Captain Winstanley was too wise to allow that. Your poor pet fetched a hundred and forty-five guineas under the hammer."

"I don't think it is very kind of you to talk of him so lightly," said Vixen.

This was the only little cloud that came between them in all the voyage. Long before sunset they were steaming into Southampton Water, and the yellow light was still shining on the fuzzy levels, when the brougham that contained Vixen and her fortunes drove along the road to Lyndhurst.

She had asked the coachman for news of his mistress, and had been told that Mrs. Winstanley was pretty much the same. The answer was in some measure reassuring: yet Violet's spirits began to sink as she drew nearer home, and must so soon find herself face to face with the truth. There was a sadness, too, in that quiet evening hour; and the shadowy distances seemed full of gloom, after the dancing waves, and the gay morning light.

FRENCH THEATRICALS.

THE Comédie Française is one of the Paris theatres which, in consequence of their money allowance from the State, are required to be kept open, vacationless, all

the year round. But necessity knows no law; and law-breaking necessity is the cause of the visit now paid to us by that unrivalled company of actors. There is a time for all things, say theatrical managers; a time to be open, and a time to be shut; above all, a time to carry out indispensable repairs and alterations. As the troupe meanwhile can do nothing at home, it may as well take advantage of the unavoidable closing of their theatre to visit London.

Even for theatres not obliged to be always open, the shut-up time is anything but a period of repose, unless on the principle that change of work is as good as play. The "cloture" is often a busier season than the easy routine during the full run of a successful piece, which night after night brings crowded houses. As soon as a theatre is closed to the public, there are redecorations, restorations, and changes to be made, not to say a word about dustings, broomings, and cleanings up. There are scenery and costumes to refresh and renew; new pieces—hard task!—to read, and receive or refuse; new stars to hunt up and vacancies to fill; and—sometimes hardest task of all—accounts to balance and debts to pay.

A great merit of the Comédie Française is, that its performances are constantly varied, as ought to be the case with a theatre claiming so high a rank. "No-blesse oblige," with playhouses as with individuals. However successful a new piece or a revival may be, it cannot, there, be allowed to run on, for an eternity of nights, to the exclusion of other pieces of equal, often superior merit. This variety of performances will be especially enjoyable during the short season they are able to give to London.

We know something here of the "runs" a piece may have; but in the non-subventioned theatres of Paris, the runs are occasionally phenomenal—excusable also. Managers have not the heart to change their programme while money is pouring in every night. It is so hard to plug up the top-slit in your cash-box while silver and gold are pouring into it regularly and fast.

A few years ago we recorded the vogue of a fairy spectacle, *La Chatte Blanche*, at the Gaité, with the remark that although *The White Cat* was the idol enshrined at that theatre at the time of writing the paper, whether it would be so at the time of your reading it was beyond the range of human foresight. Well, not only did *The*

White Cat hold her ground, but after an attempt to give her a little rest by a grand drama, with good acting, splendid scenery, bewitching ballets, and everything else likely to take, it was found that the grand drama was not the thing after all, and The White Cat had to resume her place and her antics on the stage. The scenery had become faded, the costumes worn out, the dancers' shoes and stockings holey, Thérèse's song threadbare. Never mind that. It was possible to repaint scenery, stitch up new dresses, fit the dancers with fresh chausses and—for those who wear any—fresh petticoats, and provide Thérèse with a brand-new song, crowning the whole with a new apotheosis. So refreshed, The White Cat ran on as lively as ever, and nobody could guess when she would stop. She has found repose at last, but, like the Sleeping Beauty, only to wake up, in all probability, one of these days, with renewed attractions.

The going-out of the winter theatres, some time in June or thereabouts, always takes the visitor to Paris by surprise, like the unexpected extinction of a candle, leaving you in the dark. And the worst of it is, that many places of public amusement in Paris, which never alter their bills or programmes in the newspapers, are often announced by the said newspapers to continue open nightly, after they are shut. Amongst these are the conjuring theatres, the tiny temples of legerdemain, where that great departed genius, Robert Houdin, once spell-bound his audience. The winter theatres may be roughly stated to come in and go out of season with oysters. Like that excellent bivalve, some of them are to be had a little after and a little before the months with an "r" in them; but if you think of enjoying any of them in the evening, we advise you to go in the morning and ascertain whether you will find them anything else than empty shells.

When the summer-shutting theatres are closed, the perpetuals have hot work of it; and at times they have it nearly all to themselves. If empty, they can say with Handel on a like occasion: "Ve shall hear te moosick all te petter." Critics favour them with slight attention, often allotting more space in their columns to the way in which the thermometer is playing its part; for it is quite a mistake to suppose that the English are the only people who talk about the weather. The most acceptable summer pieces are those which raise a

laugh, or provoke a smile at the very least. Winter is the season for dramatic sorrows. The dog-days are far too oppressive and weakening to allow us at once to weep and perspire. We cannot, then, afford to cry.

At such times the receipts of the Paris theatres have occasionally been incredible in respect to their smallness—one hundred francs, fifty francs, thirty francs. One night the Odéon took fifteen francs. The most astonishing fact connected with these fancy "houses" is, that they always contain an earnest spectator who has taken the trouble to secure his place. There is always somebody who, afraid of finding no room, rushes to the box-office in the morning to ensure his seat. Never was there a case of a box-office register being perfectly blank.

The variations in the receipts of the theatres, compared with the state of the temperature, offer a curious subject of enquiry. At the Théâtre Français, a register is kept of the receipts made by each dramatic work, which may almost be called barometrical. And it is the only way of arriving at a correct result. A masterpiece which has to fight against the thermometer is inevitably a lost masterpiece—done brown (shall we venture to say?) by the heat. At that theatre, by the side of the entry of each night's receipt, a note is made of the state of the weather, mathematically demonstrating that the slightest variation of temperature has a perceptible influence on the amount of money taken. When the weather in summer is absolutely fine, without the slightest indication of a change, the receipts descend to a minimum. An overclouding of the sky causes them to rise; a slight shower sends them up ten or twelve degrees. It is proved that a heavy rain setting in fills the treasury as surely as it does the water-butts. In London, doubtless the receipts of the Société will be independent of meteorological influence.

But, besides the weather, the variations in the receipts of the theatres are governed by other mysterious causes which not even Parisians can fathom. We should like to know, for instance, why one particular day of the week should be absolutely bad in respect to the money taken at one particular theatre, and another particular day excellent. Monday, the day raised to the dignity of a saint by sluggards, toppers, and idlers in general, the worst day of the week at the Gymnase, is the best at the

Ambigu. At the Ambigu, Friday is the worst day; whilst, singularly enough, at the Gymnase it is the most profitable. The cause is ascribed to its being the eve of the Hebrew Sabbath, the day when Jews more particularly frequent the theatre. Such is the Gymnase cashier's opinion. M. Jules Claretie, from whom we cite the fact, records it, at the same time professing to know nothing about it.

This same M. Claretie is one of those critics who believe that both writers and artists would gain by setting before themselves the task of inculcating some high and elevating idea and end. That a dramatic author should amuse us, well and good; but—and he hopes the expression will not be misunderstood—a dramatic author ought not to be a mere amuser. There is no need for him to stick himself up as a pedant or a dominie, but there is no reason why he should not make himself useful as well as agreeable. The weapon he wields is so powerful. The theatre is so high and conspicuous a tribune, from which, before hundreds and thousands of people, the same discourse is nightly repeated. May we not almost say with Victor Hugo that every dramatic author has the cure of souls? Certainly, although the dramatic author is not a priest, he ought assuredly to feel his responsibility as a man and a citizen.

One little piece of advice may be given to all who would appreciate the finished excellence of the Comédie Française's performances; namely, to carefully read, in the morning, the work to be represented in the evening. Of all European languages, French, perhaps, is the most difficult for an unaccustomed ear to understand when spoken. People may read French fluently, and yet be unable to follow it when they hear it pronounced by native lips. Even when not so indispensable as it really is in many cases, such preparation will still remain a profitable as well as an agreeable exercise. It is always a pleasure to renew one's acquaintance with Molière; the repurusal of Corneille and Racine we may take to our conscience as a sort of duty. Victor Hugo's want of common-sense is less glaring in his "théâtre" than in his other writings. Alfred de Musset bears well a second reading, in spite of the aftertaste of deep melancholy which he leaves behind him. Other pieces, whatever their faults may be, at least afford a study of the style and art-work of the best French living dramatic authors.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER X.

IN the "good old days" when torture was a science, there was one solace that not even the most cruel could deny their victims; for when nature could bear no more she wrought a cure for herself, and insensibility stilled the sufferer's pain awhile. As in bodily, so in mental pain, for its very keenness at last dulls sensation, and a sort of misty, unreal composure mercifully deadens the faculties.

From that one dreadful moment in which I, falling, seemed to meet the rising ground, a numbness came over me, and someone that was not I heard, as one hears things far off, voices that fain would have offered comfort, when no comfort could yet come, saw tears streaming down Miss Mary's face, and envied her in that she could weep. Someone led me in from the garden, and then I sat down in one of the big oak chairs by the side of Polly's cage. I wanted no one to speak to me, no one to touch me. I wanted to be left alone, face to face with one awful thought.

In an hour's time papa should have been here; we should have gone out through the fields together, as we did long since; but now he would never come again—he would never come again; the roses that he had loved would all bloom again when summer came, but, even then, I should never have seen him more.

I had been making a watch-guard for papa; now I drew it from the pocket of my little muslin apron, and twisted it round my fingers.

"Get her to go upstairs to her room," said someone; and I turned quickly to see Miss 'Dosa standing between me and the light from the hall door. She was as tall and rigid as ever, but—or was it part of the dream in which I was living?—her voice shook, and tears were on her cheek.

The strangeness of this softening on the part of my old enemy struck me as so marvellous a thing that I held out my hand to her, and smiled.

"He will never come again," I said. "I made this chain for him; look at it—it is no good now. What shall I do with it, Miss 'Dosa?"

What happened after this?

I can hardly tell. Time seemed to be no longer, and as I look back, one disjointed memory and another rises up, merging into each other in wild confusion. Yet one picture is clear and vivid. I was in a train;

the lamp above my head gave a sickly light, but enough to show me a figure in the opposite corner to the one in which I sat huddled, the figure of the vicar of Bromley, with a soft felt hat on the back of his head, and his hands folded over the rug across his knees.

As we whirled through the star-lit night, he neither spoke to me nor looked at me; he knew that fresh-made wounds cannot bear even the lightest touch. Once looking across at him, I saw his lips move, and I knew that all his simple, God-loving, and God-fearing soul was being lifted up in prayer for me. The knowledge brought no comfort. I was somewhere all alone in a thick cloud of darkness, through which no ray of heaven's comfort could come to me. I was alone with one thought—the old thought, yet a new phase of it. Papa would never speak to me, never kiss me again, but I should see him; there was yet time—a few days at most, but oh, what precious days!—in which the sight of my dead should be vouchsafed to me. I should kiss him, though he could not kiss me back; I should touch his hand, though it could no more close on mine.

Presently—whether in a long or short time, I cannot tell—Mr. Girdstone left his place by the window and came to my side; he took my hand, and held it close in one of his, patting it softly with the other.

"Nell," he said, "we are there now; tie your bonnet, child."

I had undone the strings, and thrown them back, for the one want I felt was air, plenty of air—something that should ease the strained tightness of my chest and throat, the burning throbbing of my temples. I did as he told me, and then our train drew up alongside the Hazledene platform.

I had no luggage with me, save a small hand-bag, and so we were quickly in a fly and on our way to the Hall. Mr. Girdstone held my hand still, and that kindly clasp seemed the only thing in all the world left to sustain me. As we passed through the gates, and under the dark shadow of the trees in the avenue, his hold grew closer, and he spoke to me—very quietly, but very distinctly—as if he wished to impress each word upon my mind.

"Nell, listen to me, dear, and try to remember what I am saying. I shall stay at the inn in the village until to-morrow night. If you want me, you have only to send a verbal message, and I will come."

As he finished speaking, our wheel grated against the curb of the steps.

I was at home once more.

The house was so still that the noise of our arrival seemed a sort of sacrilege; and as Terence appeared he stood staring at me, shaking from head to foot, and stretching out his poor trembling hands, almost as if he wanted to prevent me going in, and would fain keep me out in the chill autumn night.

"Miss Ellen, Miss Ellen," he managed to say at last, plucking at my dress as I passed him by; "wait a bit, my lady—wait a bit. Sit ye down in the chair here by the fire; ye must be cold; it's real chill to-night—too chill entirely."

He was kneeling by the fire, stirring the embers to a blaze; but as I put my hand upon his arm he rose and faced me, shaking still.

"Take me to papa, Terence," I said calmly. The nearness of my dead awed me into quietude.

"Is it myself that must do as my young lady bids me, your riverence?" he said, turning to the vicar. "Hadn't she best have a drop o' tea, and rest herself awhile?"

"No; let her have her way," was the answer. "I will come too."

So we passed down the gloomy corridors; Terence leading the way, I following, Mr. Girdstone last.

A door was opened, and the two others stood back to let me pass in.

In my agony I cried out to the ears that could not hear: "Papa, papa! it is Nell; it is your little girl—dear—I have come to you at last!"

The hour grew late. After a hurried conversation with Terence, Mr. Girdstone had left the Hall, promising to return early in the morning; and I, weakened and softened by the sight of that quiet face, whereon a smile still lingered, began to be-think me that I was not the only woman in that silent house.

"Where is Lady Vansitart?" I asked of Terence, who hovered about me, and seemed strangely ill at ease.

"She's in her room, Miss Ellen, along with Miss Dove. The new maid as come with her ladyship from foreign parts, she's there too, she is, Miss Ellen."

I put up my hand to my burning, aching eyes, and strove with all my might to grapple with this position of affairs.

"Does Lady Vansitart know that I am

here?" I said. Then I added: "But I daresay she is not able to come to me; I will go to her."

"Maybe," said Terence, rumpling his grey head with his hand as if in some sore bewilderment, "they'll not be after caring to see ye. I told the maid you'd come, and she's sartin sure to have told the mistress; maybe they'll send ye some bidding or other——"

"Send me some bidding—not care to see me," I repeated. "I can't understand what all this means."

"Well, Miss Ellen, then, it manes this: the lot of them's terrible skeered of the sickness that killed poor master, and they've been shut up there like so many nuns in a convent since iver he took ill."

Here the old man began to shake again, and the cup and saucer that he was placing on the table rattled in his hands.

"Ever since he was taken ill?" I said, holding tight on to the edge of the table by my side. "Do you mean to say, Terence—Terence, do you mean to say they left him to die—alone?"

Do what I would, my voice rose to a sort of shriek as I spoke.

"For God's sake, Miss Ellen, don't be after keening over it that way," cried poor Terence, wringing his hands. "How should the master be alone at-all at-all, when I was along wid him? Poor old Terence, as dandled him on his knee a score of times, when he wanted to ride cock-horse, and he no higher than the table, the cratur! and sure the doctor was there too."

But I might as well have been deaf for any comfort his words gave me.

"She was his wife—and she was afraid—she left him alone—to, die. Oh, papa! papa!"

I was beside myself, and Terence was little better. I have a fancy that he tried to keep me from leaving the room. But no one could have kept me back. Across the hall, up the stairs, along the gallery above to the door of the room that had once been my mother's, I sped. Then I stood still, leant panting against the wall, and knocked. The key turned in the lock, the door was opened a little way, and Lettie, more bleary-eyed, more sanctimonious than ever, looked through the aperture. She was short in stature, so that I could see into the room over her head, and once again a mirror told me the truth about the idol I had worshipped so blindly. The mirror, tall and wide, faced

the door, and gave me a full view of the widow's tall and slender figure draped in black. She was bending over a milliner's box, and her hand held some gauzy fabric, which she had evidently been examining when I knocked. On her knees beside the box knelt a dark-faced woman, doubtless the new maid "from foreign parts."

Eulalie, still holding the flimsy black stuff, turned her fair face towards the door, and listened intently to the colloquy between myself and her cousin.

A handkerchief that Miss Lettie held to her nose, and which gave forth a most disagreeable smell, somewhat impeded her utterance; but I made out that she was expressing her sorrow at the "sad home" I found myself in.

"Has she been to the——"

Thus far I caught a whisper from Lady Vansitart, and then, as the dark woman answered in the same low tone, I saw her sink down upon a chair, and heard her gasp: "Then tell her not to come in, please."

"Surely you know," mumbled Miss Dove, "that Sir Charles died of diptheria? You see how nervous poor Eulalie is. I really must ask you not to insist upon coming in."

"You need not be afraid, any of you," I cried; "I do not want to come in. I have been to papa—I have kissed him. Perhaps God in His mercy will let me die, like he did. But that is not what I came here to say. I came to ask you if it is true—if it can be true—that she—Eulalie—his wife—left him to die alone. Eulalie! Eulalie!—remember how we loved each other once; remember what I did for you in those days, and tell me—tell me that this thing is false!"

"Have you no respect for her sorrow?" urged the muffled voice close to me; "she is shattered—absolutely shattered—by this blow."

"And what am I?" I went on, heeding her not. "Do you know how I loved him? Do you know that you have robbed me of what you can never—never give me back?"

It is impossible to be sentimental and dignified, and hold your nose at the same time, but Miss Lettie tried her best.

"We can none of us rebel against the decrees of Providence," she said sniffingly, blinking reproachfully at me over the camphor-soaked handkerchief.

"Eulalie," I sobbed, for now my strength

began to fail me, "Eulalie, why did you not send for me? why did you not let me know? why have you been so cruel?"

All the time I could see her in the glass, but not her face, for she had turned away, and covered it with her hands.

"I feel that some responsibility rests upon my shoulders," put in Miss Dove indistinctly, "regarding Eulalie's shattered state; and I feel it to be my painful duty, Nell, to ask you to go. You are in a condition of much excitement; I hardly think you are answerable for what you say. I remember you were quite hysterical once before—I make all allowances."

"Ah, now, Miss Ellen, come away, won't ye? I knew you'd get no good at-all at-all, by coming here," whispered Terence, who had crept up the stairs, and now stood at my elbow.

At sight of the one who had tended Sir Charles to the last, and might naturally be looked upon as the very personification of contagion, Miss Dove closed the door with promptitude, and Terence and I were left looking at each other in blank bewilderment outside.

"I told ye, Miss Ellen, how it would be," he said plaintively; "come down and taste your cup of fine hot tea; it's famishing ye are, and nothing less."

I went down; I tasted the tea the old man brought in; I tried hard to swallow some food; I touched poor Frizzle's head, that bobbed up and down by my knee; I tried my best to put a brave face on things, but the heart within me was breaking, and every now and again cruel fancy would mock my ear with the echo of a firm quick tread and a low whistle that I had once been wont to hear, and that I should never, never hear again.

When the tea was cleared away I said to Terence: "Now tell me all about papa—don't keep back a single thing; they have robbed me of all the memories of his last hours, give me some of them back again; give me something to think of; tell me that he thought of me, spoke of me, longed for me."

Poor Terence cast a helpless look all round the room, sighed, twisted his hands together, and yielded to fate.

"There's no way out of telling ye the story of it all, is there, Miss Ellen?" he pleaded, nervously moving about, displacing and replacing this thing and that.

"None," I said; "absolutely none."

But even as I spoke with outward firmness I grew sick with the dread of what

was coming, and grasped the arm of my chair like a vice.

"Well, the master he took a chill—he took one of the worst chills as ever was; the doctor he came, and said it was as bad as bad could be. Master, he said, as how he was going—was going——"

"To see me," I put in, as Terence hesitated.

"To see you, Miss Ellen," he went on, drawing a deep breath; "and couldn't be kept in his bed nor nothing of that sort, but he was in great pain was master, even while he was sayin'——"

"In great pain! Oh, poor papa!" I moaned.

"Miss Ellen," said Terence, taking out his red handkerchief and wiping the sweat from his poor wizened face; "if you spake like that I can't get on—I shan't never get through, I know."

I made a sign to him that I would be silent.

"His throat was dry, and it was hard for a body to hear what he said, he spoke so thick-like. Well, Miss Ellen, that night the doctor he said as what ailed master was the dipthery, and Miss Dove she went into the worst 'stericks as ever I see. 'We'll all be dead in a week,' says she, squeakin' like a rat caught by the tail i' a trap; and her ladyship was skeered as bad, though, to be sure, she made less noise about it. Well, from that time they came no more anigh master, and he got wuss each hour; and, 'Master,' say I, 'let me write to Miss Ellen.' 'No,' says he; 'Lady Vansitart has done that; but I bid her to tell my dear child not to come; the risk,' says he, 'would be too great, Terence.' But he'd a kind of a hungry look on his face while he was spakin', as if he were longing for a sight o' ye for all as he'd said you mustn't be let come."

I had promised to be silent. I bit back the moanings that rose in my throat and choked me.

"'Twern't long after that as he began to spake nonsense, did master. I tried hard to make out what he said, but his words was like bits o' things as wouldn't join nobow; he kept scrabbling on the blanket wi' his fingers, like as if he were searching about for something."

"Well, go on; don't stop like that," I said, or someone said, for surely the voice that spoke was not mine.

"When the doctor came that night he brought another with him. Her ladyship and Miss Dove they wouldn't see the

doctor unless he went to them first of all; they were afraid for him to come from master's room to them."

Someone laughed.

It must have been I, for Terence stared at me with frightened eyes, thinking, no doubt, that his tale was driving me mad.

"All along master was very anxious for the ladies not to come anigh him, and I let him think they were kept back against their wills; it seemed more nat'ral like, you see, Miss Ellen."

An impatient gesture of my hand was all the reply poor Terence got.

"Master was very bad that night; he couldn't swallow not so much as a drop of water. I held him up against my shoulder, for to try if he could get his breath easier that way. I kep' him like that most through the night, and the doctors they kep' comin' in as easy as they could, and shakin' their heads and spakin' low the one to the other. I think there must ha' been a late moon, for Roland took to keenin' shockin', and master, he heard him. He turned his head towards the window; and he give a kind of a smile, too, did master. 'Is she come?' he says, says he; and his eyes looked up into mine, dim like, and as if he was trying to see me through some sort of a daze. He was thinkin' of you, Miss Ellen, was master."

He was thinking of me—thinking of me. My heart throbbed thick and fast; my eyes were suddenly blinded by a thick mist of tears. I gave a choking cry, and for the first time since that awful moment when I opened the letter little Amy brought me, I wept.

I had a confused consciousness of Terence and the housekeeper and the upper housemaid all hovering about me, and all offering comfort according to their lights. I heard the housekeeper say, as one who spoke from a vast fund of experience on such matters: "She'll be better for this, poor dear."

When at length my storm of sorrow had somewhat spent itself, and I lay back weak and weary in my chair, a sudden thought struck me: "Surely," I said to Terence, "poor Roland must know that this is a house of mourning? I have

never heard him bay once since I came home. I shall go and see him the very first thing in the morning; he loved papa, and papa loved him; he must be my dog now."

Terence looked wildly round as if for help; once more he brought out the red handkerchief and wiped his forehead. As for the two women, they shrank up to each other, as women will when some bewilderment comes upon them, and I caught the sound of a hurried whisper.

"Have you sent Roland away to keep the place quiet?" I said.

No one answered me at first; and then Terence, making believe to pounce upon a whole covey of dust upon the sideboard in an unexpected place, began to speak in a quavering voice:

"Don't ye go to the yard, Miss Ellen, don't ye now; he's gone, is Roland."

"Where to?" I put in authoritatively.

"Ah, now, and is it the likes of me can tell that, Miss Ellen? They say as beastis have no souls; but, anyway, Roland he followed the master best as he knew how. When I went to look at him the morning after master died he lay there dead upon the stones; he'd drawed his chain out as far as it would go, and laid him down and followed his master best as he knew how." And here the old man broke out crying like a child.

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THE CORPORATION OF THE

SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION.

HEAD OFFICE: 6 ST. ANDREW SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

THE FORTY-FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held at EDINBURGH on 26th March 1879. On the motion of Sir ALEX. KINLOCH, Bart.,

JOHN CARMENT, Esq., LL.D., was called to the Chair.

THE DIRECTORS submitted a very favourable REPORT, showing that the INSTITUTION maintained its high position among the Life Assurance Offices of the country. The New Business was—1776 Policies for £1,035,102, with £35,129 of Premiums, of which £3939 by single payment. The Total Receipts in the year, including Interest, were £494,310; while the Expenses of Management were 10·57 per cent of the Premium Income, or 7·53 of the Receipts.

The REALISED FUNDS at 31st December 1878 were £3,379,421, having been increased in the year by the large sum of £277,522.

The REPORT went on to state that, "Having regard to the general depreciation of Securities, which has resulted from the severe commercial crisis through which the country has passed, the Directors considered it would be expedient, and satisfactory to the Members, that at this time a thorough examination should be made of all the Securities;" and after a careful and exhaustive examination, the Committee reported that all the Loans were properly vouched, the Securities in complete order, and the Investments in a sound and satisfactory condition.

Mr. AW. RUTHERFURD, Advocate, in introducing the Report, adverted to the details of the business of the year, and in reference to the large increase (£277,500) on the Funds, said, 'I recently observed in a London periodical, *The Review*, a table of about one hundred British Life Offices, showing the amount by which their assets have increased or decreased during the eight years which have elapsed since the passing of the Life Assurance Act. Of these Offices upwards of eighty have increased their assets, the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION standing second on the list, with an increase during the eight years of no less than £1,436,398.'

Having noticed the exceptionally low rate of expenditure as under that of any Office doing a like amount of New Business, Mr. RUTHERFURD then briefly stated the principles of the Office, the increasing popularity of which was evidenced by the fact of their partial adoption by other Offices, and concluded thus:—'Although imitation is, no doubt, the sincerest flattery, and it is a gratifying tribute to our success and popularity that other Insurance Companies are

endeavouring to take advantage of our experience, I would recommend insurers who desire to enjoy the full benefits of our system, to insure in the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT.'

The Chairman, DR. CARMENT, in moving approval of the Report, remarked on the gratifying proof of public confidence afforded by the large accession of new Assurances in a year of so great depression; and in speaking of the soundness and sufficiency of the Invested Funds, he said, 'You are aware that the effect of the commercial crisis has been largely to depreciate almost all kinds of property. You have learned from the Report that the Directors in these circumstances considered it expedient to have a thorough investigation of the different securities, and you will no doubt be of opinion that they acted wisely in adopting that course.'

We examined the Bonds and Mortgages and other Security Writs, in order to see that everything was correctly vouched and in proper form. Further, our attention was particularly directed to the value of the different Securities. We examined the Valuations and Rentals upon which

LONDON OFFICE—18 KING WILLIAM STREET, E.C.

THE SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION.

the Loans had been granted, and procured additional information as to these, for the purpose of verifying the Rentals, and satisfying ourselves as to the present Actual Value of the Security Subjects. . . . And I must say, looking to the amount of the Investments of the Institution, and the very large depreciation which has recently taken place in property of every description, it was to me matter of great satisfaction to find those Investments in so thoroughly sound and safe a condition as we

found them to be. It is impossible to speak too strongly of the care and judgment which must have been exercised in the selection of these Investments. I have made these remarks because it is of the last importance to know that your funds are securely invested, and have not been imperilled by the severe commercial crisis which has overtaken our country. . . . This perfect security is combined with a rate of interest amounting overhead to fully $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, over and above income-tax.*

The Motion, seconded by Mr. SKINNER, Town-Clerk, was unanimously adopted.

SHORT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

THIS SOCIETY differs in its principles from any other Office.

INSTEAD of charging rates higher than are necessary, and afterwards returning the excess in the shape of periodical Bonuses, it gives from the first as large an Assurance as the Premiums will with safety bear—reserving the Whole Surplus for those Members who have lived long enough to secure the Common Fund from loss.

A Policy for £1200 to £1250 may thus at most ages be had for the Premium usually charged for £1000 only; while, by reserving the surplus, large additions have been given—and may be expected in the future—on the Policies of those who live to participate.

ITS TERMS are thus well calculated to meet the requirements of intending Assurers. They are specially adapted to the case of Provisions under Family Settlements, or otherwise, where it is frequently of importance to secure, for the smallest present outlay, a competent provision, of definite amount, in the case of early death.

Examples of Premiums, by Different Scales of Payment,
for Assurance of £100 at Death—With Profits.

Age.	Payable during Life.	Limited to 21 Payments.	Age.	Payable during Life.	Limited to 21 Payments.	Age.	Payable during Life.	Limited to 21 Payments.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
26	1 18 6	2 13 0	36	2 8 2	3 1 5	46	3 8 5	4 0 0
27	1 19 2	2 13 6	37	2 9 8	3 2 9	47	3 11 5	4 2 8
28	1 19 11	2 14 1	38	2 11 3	3 4 3	48	3 14 8	4 5 8
29	2 0 8	2 14 8	39	2 12 11	3 5 9	49	3 18 1	4 8 9
30*	2 1 6*	2 15 4	40†	2 14 9	3 7 5†	50	4 1 7	4 12 1
31	2 2 6	2 16 2	41	2 16 8	3 9 2	51	4 5 6	4 15 5
32	2 3 5	2 17 1	42	2 18 8	3 11 1	52	4 9 5	4 18 10
33	2 4 6	2 18 0	43	3 0 11	3 13 1	53	4 13 5	5 2 5
34	2 5 7	2 19 0	44	3 3 3	3 15 3	54	4 17 8	5 6 3
35	2 6 10	3 0 2	45	3 5 9	3 17 6	55	5 1 11	5 10 2

* A person of 30 may secure £1000 at death for a yearly Premium of £20 : 15s. ; which, if paid to any other Scottish Mutual Office, would secure a Policy (with profits) for £800 only.

OR, if unwilling to burden himself with payments during his whole life, he may secure £1000 by twenty-one yearly payments of £27 : 13 : 4—being thus free of payment after age 50.

† At age 40, the Premium ceasing at age 60, is for £1000, £33 : 14 : 2, being about the same as most Offices require during the whole of life.

☞ The Rates for other ages, or limited to other periods (as 7 or 14), may be had on application.

REPORTS, with full STATEMENT of PRINCIPLES, may be had on Application.

EDINBURGH, April 1879.

JAMES WATSON, Manager.

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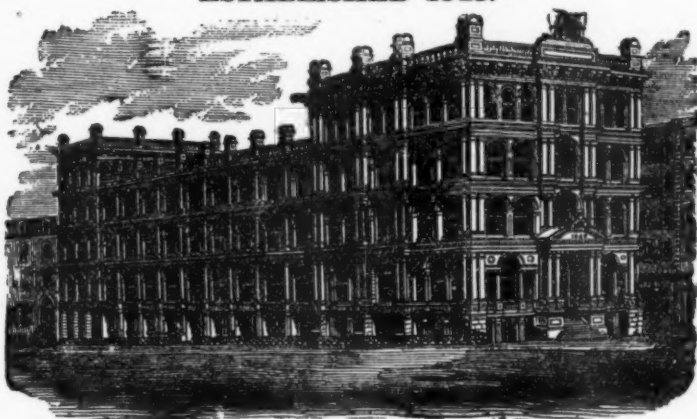
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ESTABLISHED 1845.



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STATEMENT for Year ending December 31st, 1878:—

ACCUMULATED FUNDS	£7,558,016
SURPLUS over all Liabilities and Reserve Fund, according to Valuation made by the Government	£1,417,202
INCOME FOR YEAR	£1,573,639

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By the Table on which this class of Policies is based, a person does not incur the ordinary risk in taking out a Policy. Insuring to-day for £1,000, if he should die to-morrow, the £1,000 immediately becomes a claim; and if he should live ten years, and make ten annual payments, his Policy will be paid for, and his Bonuses STILL CONTINUE, which can be drawn in cash, making

HIS LIFE POLICY A SOURCE OF INCOME WHILE LIVING.

The present practice of the NEW YORK LIFE, briefly explained, is as follows:—After the payment of *two* full yearly Premiums on a Ten-Year Non-Forfeiture Policy, if the Policy is surrendered in accordance with its provisions, it secures to the assured a PAID-UP POLICY, covering a certain specified proportion of the original insurance. Thus persons who find themselves unable to continue the payment of premiums, need not sacrifice what they have paid in.

The Paid-up Policies now issued for the proportionate partial payments, as well as for the full amount, participate in the Bonuses of the Company DURING LIFE, OR UNTIL MATURITY OF THE POLICIES.

RETURN PREMIUM ENDOWMENT POLICY.

This is a plan that offers great inducements to Insurers. If the Assured is alive at the age of 65, the Company will pay to him 1.—1st. The full amount of Policy; 2nd. The total amount of the Premiums he has paid to the Company; 3rd. The entire amount of the bonus additions to the Policy.

If the assured should die before attaining the age of 65, the Company will pay to his heirs the full amount of Policy, all the premiums that have been paid, and all the bonus additions to the Policy. For Example—

Policy 75,004, issued in England in 1870, age at issue 35, annual premium £84. Should party die in present year (1879), the Company would have to pay to his heirs:

1st.—The amount of Policy	£1,000 0 0
2nd.—All the nine annual premiums paid	756 0 0
3rd.—The bonus additions to the Policy	378 3 11
Total	£2,074 3 11

If he should live to the age of 65, it is estimated that he will receive £6,216.

ANNUITIES.

This Company grants ANNUITIES upon more favourable rates than British Companies, the high rates of interest obtained by their investments in first-class American securities enabling them to do so.

COMPARATIVE ANNUITY RATES.

The following is a comparison of the NEW YORK Company's Rates, and the average Rates of British Companies:—

CASH REQUIRED TO PURCHASE ANNUITY OF £100.					AGES.		
					50	60	70
					£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
37 British Companies	Males ..	1,885	15	0	1,088	4	0
24 Do. do.	Females ..	1,500	12	0	1,237	15	0
NEW YORK COMPANY	{ Males or Females }	1,165	10	0	907	0	0
							637 14 0

*. ANNUITIES PAID TO FEMALES SAME AS MALES.

ADVANTAGES

Offered by the New York Life Insurance Company.

1st.—It is a mutual Company. There are no Shareholders. Profits are divided *annually* among the Policy Holders only.

2nd.—Bonuses can be used to reduce the second and following years' premiums, or to increase the amount of Policy.

3rd.—Bonuses are *larger* and Rates on the average *lower* than British Companies, owing to the higher rates of interest obtained on first-class investments in America.

4th.—SECURITY is guaranteed by the stringent laws of New York, which restrict Investments, fix a positive standard of solvency, and require a rigid annual examination to be made by the Government Insurance Department.

5th.—STABILITY. The accumulated funds Dec. 31st, 1878, were £7,558,016 securely invested. The annual income is over £1,873,639, and the surplus over reserve and all liabilities £1,417,202.

6th.—Policies are non-forfeitable after two or three annual payments, according to class and conditions named in the Policies.

7th.—The Tontine Policies of this Company practically combine Life Insurance with an Investment or an Annuity, at the ordinary premium rates.

8th.—ANNUITIES. The amounts required to purchase these average 20 per cent. less than those charged by British Companies. The rates for females are the same as for males.

9th.—LIBERALITY in payment of claims. The records of the Company show many acknowledgments of its liberality and fairness in the payment of claims. There are no Shareholders, and consequently no interests adverse to those of the Policy Holders.

10th.—Claims are payable in London in sterling, and all disputed claims (in case any should arise in Great Britain) are to be decided by British Courts.

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MANCHESTER OFFICE—100, Mosley Street.—District Manager, JOHN LE M. BISHOP.

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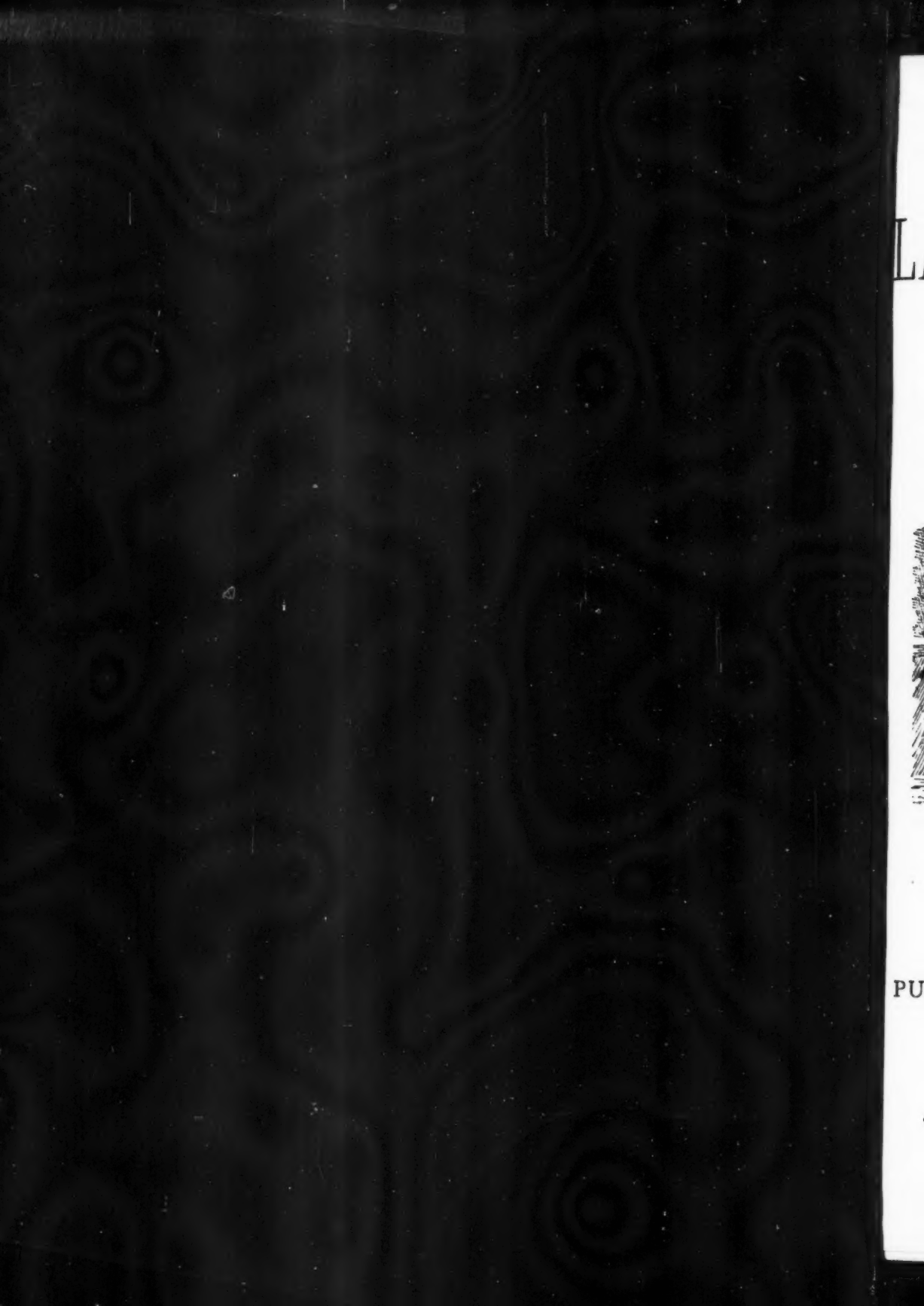
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ESTABLISHED 1815.

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A Surrender Value after payment of only ONE Premium.

Since its institution in 1815, it has paid in Claims an amount exceeding

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The following are a few examples of Claims recently paid:—

Life Assured.	Year of Entry.	Original Sum Assured.	Amount paid by Society.	Premiums received.	Proportion of Payments to Premiums.
G. S., Edinburgh . .	1817	£200 0 0	£593 11 1	£287 5 0	207 per cent.
A. M. B., Port-Glasgow	1827	999 0 0	2127 2 9	1124 0 0	189 "
C. G. G., Edinburgh .	1836	999 19 0	1917 6 3	641 13 4	299 "
W. T. H., London . .	1847	300 0 0	461 5 0	205 9 0	224 "
H. B., London . . .	1852	500 0 0	713 14 6	269 10 0	265 "
J. W., Birmingham . .	1862	500 0 0	621 14 7	224 1 3	278 "

At the last Division of Profits in 1873

A MILLION AND A QUARTER

was allocated in Bonus Additions; Members alone participating.

The next Division takes place in 1880, when Entrants before 31st December next will rank for Two Years' Bonus.

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London, 28 CORNHILL.—West End Agency, 49 PALL MALL.

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FLORVITA



THE LIFE OF FLOWERS,

FOR STIMULATING AND QUICKENING THE
GROWTH OF PLANTS, AND PRODUCING A RAPID AND HIGH
DEVELOPMENT OF BLOSSOM.

This valuable preparation is the result of several years' exhaustive trials, and it is scarcely possible to speak too confidently of it.

Plants of all descriptions, from the best known to the rarest and costliest, develop their blossom and foliage with extraordinary quickness and beauty when the Florvita is applied to them. So also with Fruits and Vegetables, which under this treatment reach perfection with great rapidity.

Exhibitors of Horticultural specimens will find the Florvita invaluable.

Florvita contains all the elements essential to healthy growth combined in a carefully prepared form, rendering them most easy of assimilation, at once imparting fresh life, and supplying rich nourishment for the perfect development of plants, both in their blossom and foliage.

To ladies who take an interest in their flowers, both indoors and out, Florvita particularly recommends itself; for though chemically it represents a very highly concentrated fertilizer, it has not the appearance or character of what is known under the head of "Flower Manures," being a delicate pink powder soluble in water, with a most agreeable bouquet.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE.—One teaspoonful of the Florvita to be added to each gallon of water used. The plants should be watered with it three times a week or more.

Prepared only by PRENTICE BROS., Chemical Laboratory, STOWMARKET.

Sold by all CHEMISTS & FLORISTS, in bottles 1/- & 2/6 each,
and in Jars of 18/- and 36/- each.

FLORVITA : The Life of Flowers.

Florvita secures the fullest & richest development of BLOSSOM

Florvita produces the greatest perfection of FOLIAGE

Florvita ensures the earliest, finest, and most luscious FRUITS

Florvita forces and perfects the most luxuriant SALADS

IMPORTANT TESTIMONIAL.

Mr. P. Grieve, Head Gardener at Culford, reports the result of carefully conducted trials of "Florvita" as follows:

CULFORD GARDENS, near Bury St. Edmund's,
May 7th, 1879.

GENTLEMEN,—Some months since you were kind enough to send me a bottle of your "Florvita," and at a subsequent period when your representative called here, I had not then had sufficient experience with it to be able to form an opinion of its value as a fertilizer.

Since that time I have tried it on various kinds of plants, and I must admit that its effect upon them has very much exceeded my expectations. To apply a stimulating manure to a collection of plants of any kind, and to find that these plants succeed well, and at once to ascribe this result to the application, is an assumption not altogether justified, at all events it is not a fair trial as to the effect of the fertilizer, as it might of course be assumed that the plants might have done equally well in the absence of the application.

My experiments have been conducted upon various sets of plants of the same species, same age, potted in the same compost (or description of soil), and growing in the same structure, applying the "Florvita" as directed to a *portion of the plants only*, and the effect produced upon this portion was very soon apparent.

Our early cucumbers here are always grown in large pots placed upon a hot water tank. To one half of the pots the "Florvita" has this season been applied twice a week, and the difference between the moieties of plants is very remarkable as regards the healthy appearance of the plants, as well as the production of fine fruits.

Should your traveller or any one connected with your establishment happen to be in the neighbourhood he might satisfy himself as to the effect of your "Florvita" by calling here.

I am, Gentlemen, yours respectfully,

MESSRS. PRENTICE BROS.

(Signed) P. GRIEVE.

Florvita develops the earliest and choicest VEGETABLES

Florvita greatly stimulates and quickens all Vegetable growth

Florvita contains nothing that is poisonous or deleterious

Florvita is a remarkably delicate and fragrant preparation

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	£	£	s. d.	
3,924	5,000	13,056	15 0	161 PER CENT.
5,389	1,000	2,364	14 0	136 "
6,876	1,000	2,305	18 0	130 "
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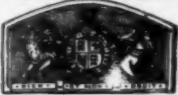
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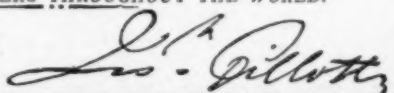
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